

SECRET SERVICE

OLD AND YOUNG KING BRADY, DETECTIVES.

Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at the New York Post-Office, March 1, 1899, by Frank Tousey.

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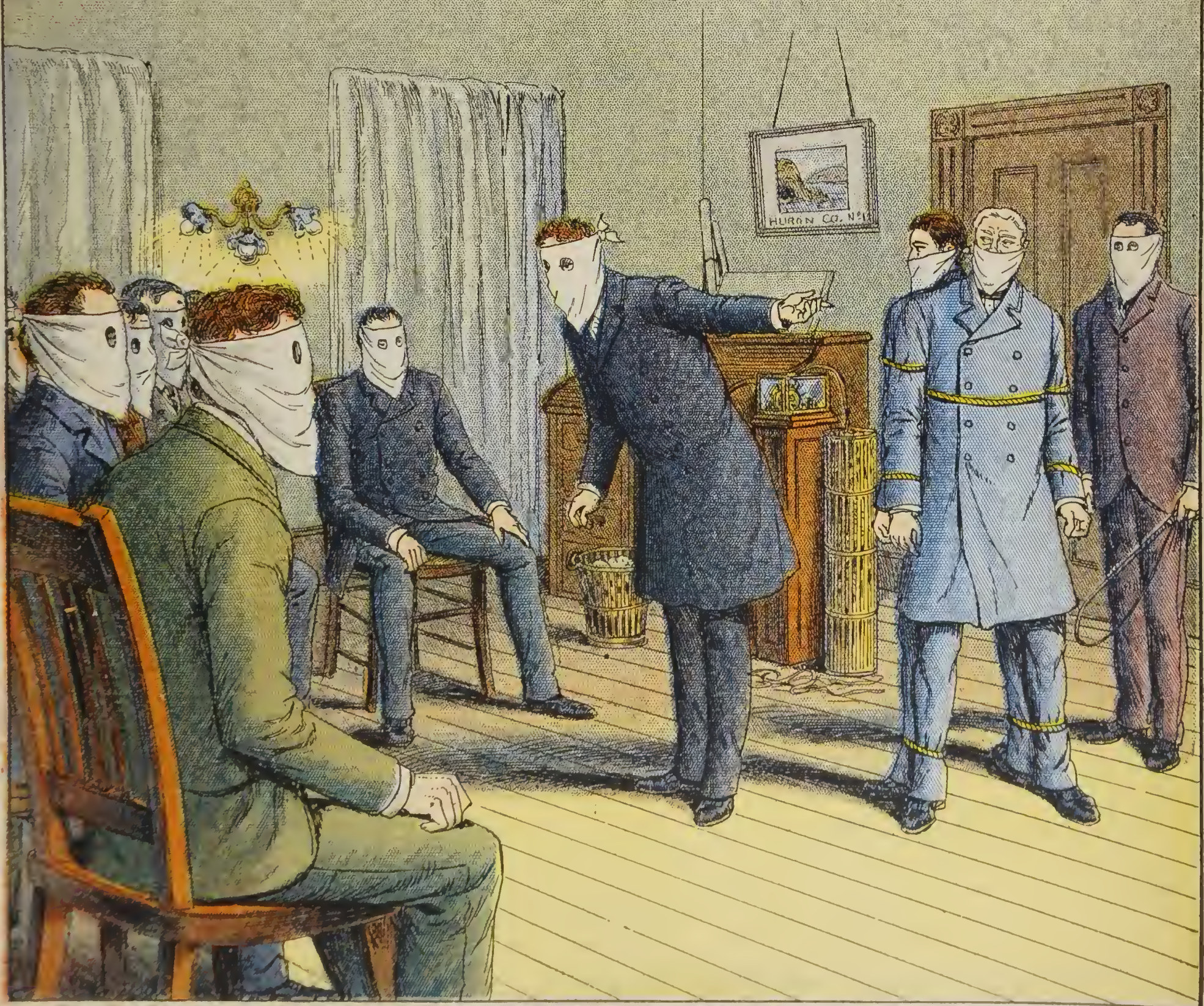
NEW YORK, MAY 18, 1906.

Price 5 Cents.

THE BRADYS AND "OLD KING COPPER";

OR, PROBING A WALL STREET MYSTERY.

By A NEW-YORK DETECTIVE.



The Bradys were marched into the masked assemblage and tied back to back, the man with the whip standing guard. "Gentlemen," said the Mask who met them, "let me introduce the most notorious of butters-in and spies—the Bradys."



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NEW YORK, MAY 18, 1906.

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CHAPTER I.

A CALL FROM "OLD KING COPPER'S" SON.

The story which we are about to relate has to do with one of the deepest mysteries which ever puzzled Wall street, New York.

The names we employ are necessarily fictitious, but by all who remember the incidents the chief actors will be readily recognized.

The beginning of the case was the visit paid by young Dodgling to the Bradys at their old house on Washington Square, on the night of May 24th.

It was a night of rain, a terrible storm—the "blossom" storm, farmers called it—was sweeping up the Atlantic coast.

Young King Brady, who had been to the police headquarters on Mulberry street, was returning on foot at about eleven o'clock.

As he struck across Washington Square, where the wind has full sweep, it almost took him off his feet.

"Harry," as Old King Brady always calls his partner, closed his umbrella, knowing that it would go inside out next moment, and pulling his hat down over his eyes started across the Square.

The wind sweeping through the old trees twisted and bent their branches in every direction; it seemed every instant as if one must snap and come crashing down upon Harry's head.

The benches where the park lodgers camp out for the night were deserted, so far as Harry could see, save for one dismal old man who wore a dripping plug hat, with the collar of his black broadcloth coat turned up under his ears.

There he sat, with his legs thrust out, and his hands in his pockets, too drunk or too dejected to move.

Harry wondered which.

To satisfy his curiosity he tossed him ten cents, and saw the fellow make a bee line for the nearest saloon on Fourth street.

"That beautiful bird could pick up a free load without the least difficulty if there were other fools like me crossing the Square to-night," Young King Brady said to himself. "The trouble is, I'm the only one."

But was he?

At this very moment he saw a young man wearing a

light-weight ulster and a courderoy cap coming into view through Washington Arch.

His hands were buried deep in his pockets, and his head was bent against the storm.

He turned into the walk which Harry was following, and strode on.

Young King Brady, watching him because there was no one else to watch, saw him pause at the other end of the Square, and stand looking at the line of old houses across the way.

Harry pushed on, and as he was about passing the young man the question which he half expected came:

"Beg pardon, but do you live around here?"

"Why, yes," replied Harry. "What is it you want?"

The face which was turned toward him was frank, open, and intelligent.

But at the same time it carried with it a worried look, which Young King Brady did not fail to observe.

"I was looking for the house of Old King Brady, the detective," was the answer. "I have forgotten the number—should have written it down. I believe it is somewhere on this block."

"It is. I am going there myself."

"Oh, indeed. Would you mind if I went with you, then? That would solve the whole problem."

"Not at all. Come right along."

"Do—do you live there? I don't want to be inquisitive, but——"

"Yes, I live there."

"Do you know if Mr. Brady is home?"

"No, I don't. I haven't been there since morning, but I daresay he is. If not, he certainly soon will be. Just come along with me."

"You are awfully kind. May I ask one more question?"

"As many as you like—certainly."

"Then are you Young King Brady?"

"I am."

"I am so glad I met you. Just what I did not want to do was to go ringing all the bells on the block inquiring for a detective."

"Nothing of the sort will be necessary. Here we are."

Harry ran up the steps and opened the door with his latch-key.

"I take it for granted that you want to consult us on business?" he said.

"Oh, yes. I'll give you my card when we get inside. It is an awful night, and my coat is soaked through."

"It is a rough night. Just take your coat off, and our

man will dry it for you by the kitchen fire. You are lucky to have such a one. An umbrella to-night isn't of the least use."

"That you, Harry?" called a voice from the back parlor.

"Yes—there he is."

The first was shouted, the last spoken in a low tone.

"Old King Brady?" asked the visitor.

"Yes."

"I am so relieved."

"Come right in."

Harry, having now laid aside his own overcoat, led the way into a comfortably furnished library in the rear of a gloomy parlor which the detectives seldom use.

Here sat a tall, elderly gentleman of striking appearance and peculiar dress.

He wore a long blue coat of antique cut, carrying a double row of flat, brass buttons down the front.

Old King Brady affects this unusual dress for reasons of his own, which even Harry has never been quite able to fathom.

In addition to the coat he always, when not in disguise, wears an old-fashioned stock, in connection with a stand-up collar.

But Old King Brady's especial trademark, so to speak, is a big white hat with its enormously broad brim.

This, it is unnecessary to say, he did not have on at the present time.

"This gentleman wishes to consult us," said Harry, motioning his visitor toward a chair.

"Here is my card, gentlemen."

The young man handed Harry a card, which read:

"Mr. John H. Dodgling, Jr., 2 East 8—th street."

"Well!" thought Harry, as he passed it along.

It was the card of the son of one of the richest of New York's multimillionaires.

Nearly everybody knows John H. Dodgling, the "soap-fat king," as he was originally called.

Starting in life with a tin kettle on his shoulder, collecting grease from door to door, John H. Dodgling finally became the head of the soap trust.

Passing from this to mining interests, he ended by obtaining control of the copper production of the United States.

By many devious paths and strange manipulations, the dollars rolled in upon him, until now his dollars had increased beyond counting.

"Old King Copper" was the name by which John H. Dodgling was known to Wall street at the time of which we write.

"Be seated," said Old King Brady, laying the card upon the table. "What is it you wish?"

His manner was somewhat cold.

Old King Brady is peculiar in other things than the matter of dress.

He has little use for New York's very rich men, and has refused many a liberal offer to do their dirty work.

"I am greatly troubled about my father," replied young Dodgling, dropping into a chair.

He looked it. He was only a great big boy, and he had yet to learn the art of keeping his feelings from displaying themselves upon his face which his father knew so well.

"What's the trouble?" demanded Old King Brady. "State your case briefly. I may take up with it and I may not. I shall want to hear all about it first."

"You know of my father, of course, Mr. Brady?" young Dodgling asked.

"Of course."

"And I suppose, like the rest of the world, you hate and despise him."

Old King Brady shrugged his shoulders.

"I have not the pleasure of Mr. Dodgling's acquaintance," he said, "but I had the honor of refusing a case of his once."

"I know. My father is a hard man, but he is still my father, and I am his only child. I have every reason to believe that he has fallen into serious trouble, and something must be done. For all I can tell he may even have been murdered."

"Is it as serious as that?"

"Just as serious."

"Explain."

"Well, you know that father's offices are on the twelfth floor of his building, No. — Wall street."

"Yes."

For the last three years he has practically lived there. He seldom comes home. He has a sleeping room fitted up there, and a Japanese valet to look after his wants. Once he retires behind a certain door the orders are that under no consideration must he be disturbed. Even I do not dare to attempt to communicate with him."

"Foolish man! He might die in those secret rooms some day."

"As I have often told him. However, I have not the slightest influence over him. Ever since my mother's death he has treated me with coldness and severity. I tell you, Mr. Brady, there have been times when I wished that all his money was at the bottom of the sea—but no matter! My troubles don't interest you. The point is that father shut himself up in his private rooms three days ago, and has given no sign of life since. No one dares to break in on him, and his private secretary, Mr. James Fraleigh, will neither take the responsibility himself, nor allow me to do it. Something ought to be done."

"But the Japanese valet?"

"Oh, father discharged him last week, and up to the time he shut himself in there he had engaged no other."

"Then he is supposed to be alone in there?"

"Yes."

"Does Mr. Fraleigh stand guard at the door?"

"He is in the outer office all day. There are always two detectives there at night."

"To chase away process servers?"

"Don't be sarcastic, Mr. Brady. I have come to you for help. Unless I appeal to the police I don't know what else to do."

"There, there, boy! I'll help you if I can. You want me to go down there?"

"If you only would. You are an officer—you can force your way in. With me to give you authority I don't see how they can refuse."

"What is your idea of the matter? Have you any real son to suspect foul play?"

"Perhaps you may think me foolish, but I do suspect James Fraleigh. Father has so many enemies. If Fraleigh should have sold him out there is no telling what may have happened."

"It would be very easy for you to get an order from the police authorizing you to break down that door."

"I know, but then the papers. Just think how they have roasted my father. If it is all right, and he is just keeping under cover for his own purposes, he would be furious."

"With you?"

"Oh, yes! He never spares me."

"Is it your idea to go to-night?"

"Yes. The watchman at the door is a decent fellow. He will let us in. I have had a talk with him about the matter. He agrees with me that something ought to be done."

"I suppose we may as well go, Harry," said Old King Brady, turning to his partner.

"I am ready. I suppose we may have to put up a fight."

"Jones and McNally will never dare to interfere with me if I have the Bradys at my back," young Dodgling exclaimed.

"Those must be the two detectives?"

"Yes."

"I think you are right. If they attempt to interfere with me I shall certainly make it very uncomfortable for them. Are they both there?"

"Yes; every night. They pace the corridor of the 12th floor. Another detective is on duty in the day-time."

"Does anyone know you have come to us?"

"I hope not. I have had an idea for the last three days that my movements have been spied upon. There always seems to be somebody following at my heels. That is why I did not come in my automobile or take a cab. I just took the cars, and I think I have given them the slip."

"Very good. We will telephone for a cab and go down there. Harry, just see if anybody is watching the house."

Young King Brady was gone some minutes, during which time the old detective questioned "Jack" Dodgling, as his friends called him, further about the matter.

"If there is anyone watching I can't make it out," Harry reported on returning.

"Very good," said Old King Brady. "Call a cab."

Harry worked the telephone, and in a few moments the cab was at the door.

The Bradys and Jack Dodgling entered it, and were driven downtown.

CHAPTER II.

UNEARTHING A WALL STREET MYSTERY.

The Dodgling Building on Wall street is one of the plainest of the skyscrapers, and at the same time one of the most massive and solidly constructed, having been built not with a steel frame as is the modern custom, but of solid stone.

Here hundreds of brokers and bankers have offices, but the entire 12th floor was at the time we write occupied by John H. Dodgling's many enterprises.

This was the headquarters of the Soap Trust, and of the National Copper Co.

The offices on the 12th floor were guarded like a fortress.

They were the terror of process servers.

Every day in the week somebody was trying to serve papers on Old King Copper, but few ever succeeded.

Many a luckless fellow had been roughly handled by the private detective who hovered about the Copper King for making the attempt.

That the man lived in the building much of his time had, however, been kept a profound secret, and even Old King Brady, who professed to know so much about New York, had never heard of this before.

Therefore the curiosity of the old detective was somewhat excited.

He saw at a glance that for a gang of shrewd Wall street operators to get possession of the person of Old King Copper might spell millions to those who put up the job.

Thus he was secretly pleased to take up with Jack Dodgling's case.

This was very different from doing dirty work for a multimillionaire.

Wall street at night is nearly always deserted, but on this particular night it was positively dismal.

The rain was coming down in torrents when the detectives and their companion left the cab.

A private detective whose beat lay upon this block immediately came forward to see what was doing.

He was wrapped in a rubber coat, and wore an old slouch hat over his eyes.

"Who are you? What do you want here?" he roughly demanded of Harry and Jack Dodgling, who were first out of the cab.

But then, as he saw Old King Brady get out he promptly changed his tone.

"Oh, it is you, Mr. Brady!" he exclaimed. "A dreadful night."

"It is indeed, Kelly," replied the old detective. "We have business in the Dodgling building. How do we get in, do you know?"

"Well, I can call the night watchman; but I doubt if even you can get in there. It is more than I can do myself."

"If you will get the watchman at the gate we can manage it," said Jack, as we shall hereafter call the young man. "If you can't do that I can."

"Mr. Dodgling's son, Kelly," said the old detective.

"Oh," said Kelly. "I see. That's all right, then. I'll give the ring."

Advancing to the ponderous iron grill which guarded the entrance to the building, he pressed the electric bell three times.

In a very few minutes a man with a lantern appeared behind the bars.

"Oh! It is you, is it, sir?" he said. "You have come just in good time."

He opened the gate, and admitted them to the inner hall.

Jack introduced the Bradys, and the watchman was, in turn, introduced to them under the name of McManus.

"They are both gone, Mr. Jack," he said. "Whatever it means, both of them threw up their jobs this afternoon."

"You mean Jones and McNally, the night detectives," demanded Jack.

"Yes. They never gave Mr. Fraleigh a minute's notice, but just come in to say they had quit."

"And how did Fraleigh take it?" asked Old King Brady. McManus looked at Jack.

"Shall I answer?" he asked.

"Certainly," replied Jack. "Mr. Brady has taken charge of this mystery for me."

"He was very mad about it, so," said McManus. "He took on at a great rate."

"He did, eh?" retorted Jack. "Well, then, did he try to communicate with my father?"

"He told me that he had seen the old gentleman, and that he was all right, Mr. Jack."

"So?" exclaimed Old King Brady. "Then perhaps we are not needed here after all."

"Don't you believe a word of it!" cried Jack. "Fraleigh told me the exact contrary late this afternoon, and what is more, he never said a word about these men having left."

"Ah!" said McManus. "It's none of my business, av coorse, but if the ould gentleman was my father I would say that something ought to be done."

"And something is going to be done right now," said Jack. "Is there no one in the building, then, but you?"

"An' my family, an' yerselves."

"Quite a lot of us all together," said Old King Brady. "McManus, is your elevator running? I don't feel ambitious to walk up twelve pair of stairs."

"It can be made to run, then," replied the watchman. "This way, gentlemen, if you please."

They were lifted to the 12th floor, and by the watchman admitted to Mr. Dodgling's palatial offices.

The private office was furnished more elaborately than any the Bradys had ever seen.

But with this we have no concern, save to mention that over at one side was a portiere of some expensive material.

Jack pushed this aside, revealing a painted door, upon which he struck his clenched fist.

"Solid steel," he said. "Behind this are my father's private apartments. McManus, give him the signal. We will soon see whether he is in there or not."

"Stay!" said Old King Brady. "Suppose he does not answer? How do you propose to open the door in that case?"

"I have a key which he gave me over a year ago," replied Jack.

"Very good. McManus, have you made any attempt to communicate with Mr. Dodgling?"

"No, sir. It is forbid."

"But suppose the building takes fire?"

"I am to give him the signal. I press this button five times. Them's his orders, sir. What's more, Mr. Fraleigh told me that if I ever attempted to communicate with him for any other reason I should get the bounce."

"Ring," said Jack.

Five times the button was pressed.

There was no answer after a five minutes' wait, during which McManus gave the fire signal three times.

"Now, Mr. Dodgling," said Old King Brady, turning to Jack.

The young man produced a peculiar key, and fitted it into the lock.

The Bradys could hear the bolts shoot back, but the door refused to open.

"What's the matter?" cried Harry.

"Something holds it," was the reply.

"Let me try," said the old detective.

"There is something against it," he said after one or two ineffectual attempts.

"Is it barred?" asked Harry.

"I don't think so."

"Sure, there's no bars behind there, nor place to put 'em," declared McManus.

"Come, altogether," said Old King Brady. "We are here for business. Let us put this thing through."

They crowded together then, and threw their united strength against the door.

It yielded slightly.

Apparently there was some heavy piece of furniture behind it.

"Once more!" cried Old King Brady.

Again they threw their united strength against the door.

There was a crash, and the door moved inward enough to allow a man to slip through.

Jack was starting to enter when Old King Brady caught him by the shoulder and pulled him back.

"Wait!" he breathed. "Let us see if there is anything doing first."

They listened, but not a sound could be heard behind the door.

"Go on, Harry," said Old King Brady.

Harry produced his little electric dark lantern, and slipped in behind the door.

They heard him dragging something away, and then he opened the door wide.

There lay the wreck of a heavy mahogany bookcase, which had been placed against the door.

The room was but a small and plainly furnished one.

Beyond it, toward the rear of the building, opened another room, equally dark.

"Great heavens, there is something wrong!" gasped Jack. "My father is dead! This should never have been allowed to run so long."

"Sure, an' that thing falling made noise enough to wake the seven sleepers," muttered McManus.

"Lead on, Harry," said Old King Brady. "Push through to the other room."

Here the furnishing was that of a bed-room.

It was also in simple style.

The bed was tumbled up and had evidently been slept in.

It was partly pulled out from the wall also.

Two chairs lay overturned.

A double student lamp was a wreck upon the floor, mixed up with a table-cloth and two books. The table from which these things had come lay on its side.

"There has been a struggle here," said Old King Brady. "You must prepare for the worst, Mr. Dodgling."

The remainder of the suite was hurriedly examined.

But the dead body of John H. Dodgling, which Old King Brady fully expected to see, was not found.

The next was the dining-room.

This was not in disorder, except for the remains of a meal which lay spread upon the table.

Beyond was a little room with cupboard and a sink for washing dishes, and a gas arrangement for light cooking.

Beyond that again was a small bedroom which Jack said had been occupied by Mr. Dodgling's Japanese valet.

This was all.

No trace of the man of many millions could be found.

But the mystery was a deep one.

Assaulted and dragged from his bed, Mr. Dodgling had apparently been.

Indeed, there were bloodstains upon the floor near the bed.

It looked as if the millionaire had been attacked suddenly in his sleep.

When dragged out of bed his head had apparently struck upon the floor, and had bled.

But the mysterious part was the presence of the heavy mahogany bookcase against the outer door.

Both Jack and McManus declared that there was no other means of entrance or exit to these private apartments save by the windows, and these were nearly two hundred feet up from the ground.

Of course, the moving of this heavy piece of furniture could only have been effected from the inside.

How, then, had the abductors of the millionaire managed to get away with their victim?

Jack grew greatly excited, and began to talk of murder and the like.

"Just come here a minute, young man," said the old detective, taking him by the arm.

He drew him into the Jap's little room, and shut the door.

"You want to take this quietly," he said. "You must not talk so!"

"But, Mr. Brady, he is my father, and even if all the world does hate and despise him, I——"

"Oh, I know! But remember, even that man McManus may be in the plot. You must be careful what you say."

"I leave all in your hands, Mr. Brady. I can't begin to tell you how thankful I am that I brought you here."

"And now that we are here we want to solve this mystery, and we must. Our professional reputation is at stake."

"Spare no pains. If you want money——"

"Not a cent! Not a cent until we have finished this business. Now tell me, who owns the property next door?"

"Both buildings belong to my father."

"As I remembered it. They were not built at the same time, however."

"I'm sure I don't know."

"But I do. I remember when both were built."

"What do you think?"

"There are two theories to be entertained."

"And those are?"

"First a secret passage leading through the wall into the next building."

"It seems incredible."

"Second that in some way your father was carried out of one of these windows, across this well out here, and into the offices beyond."

"That is possible."

"What are those offices?"

"They are occupied by the National Copper Company, of which my father is president."

"You don't happen to know who is on the other side of this wall in the next building?"

"No. I have no idea."

"Your father has no private office in there?"

"No, indeed. These are his only offices, as far as I ever heard."

"Very well," said Old King Brady. "Then all to be said now is that we must get to work and probe this mystery to the end."

CHAPTER III.

HAVING IT OUT WITH SECRETARY FRALEIGH.

Releasing Jack Dodgling, Old King Brady took McManus, the watchman, into the bedroom.

He questioned the man closely, but in the end became convinced that he was perfectly sincere, and knew nothing whatever about the affair.

"Who is your immediate boss, outside of Mr. Dodgling?" he asked.

"Mr. White, the superintendent of the building," was the reply.

"Very good; you will see him in the morning?"

"Yes."

"Then tell him exactly what has happened, but hold yourself subject to young Dodgling's orders—see?"

"That is, if I get the bounce I don't go?"

"Exactly. You'll not get the bounce. In the meantime, remember that it is of the highest importance that this business should be kept secret. You understand?"

"Yes."

"You will not speak of it to anyone but Mr. White."

"How about Mr. Fraleigh?"

"Refer him to young Dodgling."

"Very good, sir. I'll do as Mr. Jack says."

"You will do as I say, unless you are anxious to get yourself into trouble," replied Old King Brady, meaningly. "Now go."

For the next hour the Bradys and Jack spent their time searching for some secret exit to the room.

None was discovered.

And yet in such matters the Bradys are most expert.

It was nearly three o'clock when they left the building, and before doing so Old King Brady put a seal on the door.

"You want to be here early enough to-morrow morning to avoid any possibility of this man Fraleigh getting ahead of you," said Old King Brady, as they walked up Wall street, for the cab had been dismissed.

"I'll put up at a hotel somewhere," replied Jack. "But I wish one of you could be with me when I meet Fraleigh."

"You do not like him?"

"No. I detest him. That he has turned my father against me I feel certain."

"He has a complete insight into your father's private affairs?"

"No, indeed. No one has that. He knows more than anyone else, though."

"Including yourself?"

"I know nothing at all."

"You can come home with us. Harry will go down there with you in the morning."

"I should be very glad to have it arranged that way."

"Then it shall be. Now look here, say nothing about

the Bradys when you meet the man. Just tell him that Harry is a friend of yours. Tell him that you and he broke in here last night."

"I'll do it; but how about McManus?"

"I have warned him to hold his tongue except to the superintendent of the building, Mr. White. Is there any danger of his being down before Fraleigh?"

"I don't know."

"You had better see him first thing in the morning, and tell him to refer everyone to you, and say nothing at all."

"I'll do it."

"Pardon me, but do you ever go out into society?"

"Never."

"What do you go in for?"

"I am studying electrical work just now. I am alone by myself in our great house most of the time."

"Has your father never talked of taking you into his business?"

"Never. He treats me as though I was a fool."

"You want to change all that, and prepare to take your place in the world, young man," said Old King Brady. "If I may be allowed to say so, it is your father who is the fool—not you."

"Oh, don't say anything against him now, Mr. Brady. He may be dead."

"It may be so, but I don't believe it. Old King Copper may be worth a lot as a prisoner to some of these Wall street crooks, but I fail to see what he would be worth dead."

Old King Brady changed the subject then, and they proceeded to the old house on Washington Square, where the Bradys have kept bachelor's hall for a number of years.

Here Jack was given a comfortable room, and at seven o'clock he was awakened by Harry.

"You want to get up now, and we will go downtown," said Young King Brady.

"Does the old gentleman follow us?" asked Jack.

"We are to meet him at our office after you have talked with this man Fraleigh," was the reply.

Jack saw nothing of the old detective.

By half-past eight they turned up at the Dodgling Building on Wall street.

When Mr. James Fraleigh, private secretary, entered the office he found Jack and Harry seated there.

He was a tall young man with a womanish cast of countenance, and was dressed in the height of fashion.

Harry conceived an instant dislike to him.

"Ha! Good-morning, Jack!" the secretary exclaimed.

And then, glancing at the open door, he added, with something of a start:

"Has your father come out at last?"

"No," replied Jack. "He has not come out. I went in."

"What!"

"Mr. Fraleigh, let me introduce my friend, Mr. Harris," said Jack, coolly.

The secretary barely nodded.

"How came you to go in? When did you do it? Where is your father?" he broke out.

"I went in last night with my friend here," replied Jack.

"For heaven sake, speak up! What are you keeping back from me?" demanded the secretary, growing more excited every instant.

"I did not find my father inside there, Mr. Fraleigh," said Jack, in the same quiet manner which Harry had cautioned him to maintain. "You had better go in yourself and see how matters stand."

Fraleigh glared, and without a word entered the private rooms.

"Jack! Come here!" he called, after a moment. "Come alone."

"We go together," breathed Young King Brady.

"I told you to come alone!" cried Fraleigh, as they entered.

"Look here, Mr. Fraleigh," said Jack, "the time has passed when you can order me about. I am no longer a boy. I want you to understand it, too."

Here was a declaration of independence!

Secretary Fraleigh changed front at once.

"I should like to know what all this means, Jack?" he quietly asked.

"Mr. Dodgling, if you please!" flashed the young man. "I am called by my first name only by my friends."

Fraleigh bit his lip, but at the same time caught his cue.

"Very well. Mr. Dodgling, will you kindly tell me what it is about your father?"

"Perhaps you know, but I know nothing!" cried Jack. "I have a key to that door. I came in here last night, and Mr. Harris helped me. We had to push the bookcase away. It was backed up against the door here. We found things in my father's bed-room as you see them. What does it all mean?"

To all this Young King Brady listened with some regret.

He was more than sorry that Jack should have thus attacked the secretary.

It seemed to him most unwise.

But at the same time he did not care to interfere.

"I know no more what it means than you do, Mr. Dodgling," replied Fraleigh. "I simply obeyed orders, and did not disturb your father, that is all. You know as well as I do that he has remained shut up in there for as much as a week at a time, and that more than once, too."

"But that was when he had Arato to look after his wants."

"He is well able to take care of himself," said Fraleigh, with a shrug of the shoulders. "He did not use Arato's services half the time."

"Then you know nothing about all this?" demanded Jack.

"Nothing whatever. I should have suggested trying to

communicate with Mr. Dodgling this morning. I was going to do so in any case."

"Do you know that Jones and McNally have quit?"

"I do."

"Why was that?"

"I don't know. They simply told Mr. White that they were going—that is all."

"Didn't you try to stop them?"

"I did. I had them in here, and begged them to remain at least till your father was ready to see them, but they would not."

"What reason did they give for leaving?"

"Jones claimed that they had been offered a chance to go to Europe with some gentlemen whom they declined to name, and that they were going."

"Did you pay them off?"

"Yes. I am not obliged to account for my actions to you, but you see I am doing it. I have nothing to conceal."

"What do you think can have happened to my father?"

"I know no more than you do yourself."

"He was evidently attacked while in bed."

"It looks that way."

"How did his assailants get in there? How did they ever get him out?"

"Don't ask me. You had better call in the police or detectives. Get somebody whose business it is to solve mysteries to attend to this."

"I don't want the police to have anything to do with it if it can be avoided."

"As you will. You have taken a stand against me, so nothing remains but for me to retire to the background."

"My father's private papers ought to be sealed up."

"Your father's private papers are in my charge, and I propose to keep them so until ordered by the courts to give them up. I see, by the way, that a seal was put on this door, and was afterwards broken. Who is responsible for that?"

"I broke it myself."

"Very good. I don't know that I have anything more to say."

"Shall you notify the police?"

Fraleigh seemed to hesitate.

"Do you wish me to remain silent?" he asked.

"Through to-day—yes."

"Very well. I will do it. We had better lock this door."

"I'll lock it and seal it again," said Jack. "What is more, I shall keep the key."

"All right. I have no objection. May I ask what you propose to do?"

"I'll tell you in a moment," replied Jack. "Meanwhile, you may leave me here with my friend."

Fraleigh then went into the secretary's office.

"How did I do it, Jack?" asked Harry.

"You certainly asserted your authority all right," replied Harry.

"It is time. That sleek scoundrel has ridden over me rough-shod long enough."

"You believe him to be a scoundrel, then?"

"I do, indeed. To be frank with you, Mr. Brady, I don't believe my father would have had any use for him if he was anything else."

Harry was silent.

"This fellow is beginning to assert himself with a vengeance," he thought. "I'm sure I don't know how to advise him."

But Jack asked his advice in the next breath.

"What shall I tell him?" he demanded.

"Tell him that you propose to engage detectives."

"Shall I say Bradys?"

Harry pondered.

"The Governor said not, so I think you had better not," he replied at last.

"Very well. Just detectives?"

"Yes."

"Come on! We will get out of this right now."

They passed into the secretary's office and Jack locked the door behind him.

"Aren't you going to restore the seal?" demanded Fraleigh.

"No," said Jack, accepting Harry's slight shake of the head as his guide.

"Will you tell me now what you propose to do?"

"Yes."

"Well?"

"I am going to hire detectives."

"Private?"

"Yes."

"What office?"

"That's my business."

"Suit yourself. When will you be back?"

"I can't say."

"And in the meanwhile you want me to keep absolutely silent about this affair?"

"I had rather you would."

"Very well, Mr. Dodgling. Your wishes shall be observed."

Fraleigh turned to his desk then, and the two young men left the building.

"What do you think of that fellow, Harry?" demanded Jack. "You see, I am going to be familiar with you, and I wish you would be the same with me."

"Oh, I don't like him," replied Harry. "But that don't necessarily argue that he is a scoundrel."

"I'd like to bet high that he is," declared Jack. "And while I'm about it I'm betting that he is at the bottom of the disappearance of my father."

"Come on," said Harry. "We will go to the office and make our report."

CHAPTER IV.

OLD KING BRADY BALKED.

While in the offices of Old King Copper, Old King Brady had spied hanging on the wall near the private secretary's desk a framed photograph of a sleek-looking gentleman, whose face attracted his attention.

He inquired of Jack who it was, and was informed that it was a picture of Mr. Fraleigh himself.

"What about a man who will hang his own picture up in his employer's office?" Old King Brady asked himself. "Something very strange about that. I wonder what it can mean?"

But there was something else about the picture.

As soon as he looked at the face it struck Old King Brady that he had seen it before.

Right after breakfast, in pursuit of this train of thought, Old King Brady went to work on the pictures of the Rogues Gallery.

Now, the old detective has made an exhaustive study of these pictures.

He is able to carry hundreds of them in his memory.

Many he could recognize and name at a glance.

In other cases he is able to recognize the faces without recalling the names.

Was it here that he had seen the picture of James Fraleigh?

An examination would show.

And it did show.

After an hour's hard work—and what work is harder than studying a lot of faces—Old King Brady lit upon the very duplicate of the Fraleigh picture.

There the man was, with his number and the description of his crime.

"Come," thought the old detective, "this is singular. 'Why should he hang that picture in Old King Copper's office, knowing as he must that it is here?'"

The solution of this mystery might have puzzled some.

But with the shrewd old detective an explanation instantly suggested itself.

More of this in a moment.

Old King Brady at once went to the shabby little office on Park Row, which he and Harry made their headquarters, and awaited the arrival of the two young men.

They came soon.

Jack looked about the wretched little den in evident surprise.

"What's the matter?" demanded Old King Brady.

"Matter? Nothing. I——"

"You think my office small?"

"Well, rather."

"And its location poor?"

"I suppose it suits your business, Mr. Brady."

"Exactly, and when you have said that you have said

all. Now, what about friend Fraleigh? Did he take it coolly or otherwise?"

"You tell it, Harry," said Jack. "You understand how to get at these things better than I do."

Harry briefly described the interview with the secretary.

"Well," said Old King Brady, "what do you think? Is he in it or not?"

"I wouldn't undertake to say."

"And you, Mr. Dodgling?"

"I think he is," replied Jack. "I thought so from the first."

"Exactly. Now, tell me what you know of this man?"

"Nothing, when you come down to it."

"How long has he been with your father?"

"As I remember it is about five years."

"During those five years you have seen them together many times, of course?"

"Oh, yes."

"How does your father treat him? As an equal or as an inferior?"

"The last is it. I wouldn't stand an hour for what Fraleigh has to stand every day. He treats him like a dog."

"How does Fraleigh take it?"

"Well, he always seems to be horribly afraid of father."

"Did it ever strike you as strange that Fraleigh should hang his own picture up in the office?"

"Yes; it's horrid bad taste, of course. I often wondered why he did it."

"Is he a man who seems to be stuck on himself?"

"No, I couldn't say that. He might give a stranger that impression, but with my father he was always meek enough. When it came to me, though, it was different. He never lost an opportunity to sit down on me. Harry will tell you how he acted this morning until I called him down."

"Well, now let me tell you," said Old King Brady. "Six years ago one James Phraner was just finishing up a ten-years' sentence for forgery in Sing Sing."

"Who is he?"

"A man whose picture in the Rogues Gallery is No. 6488, and that picture is the very duplicate of the picture of James Fraleigh which hangs in your father's office."

"You don't mean it! Then you think they are the same person?"

"I haven't the least doubt of it."

"This amazes me, of course. But why——"

"Why should he hang his picture up in your father's office if that is the case? Is that what you were going to say?"

"Yes."

"Because your father forced him to do so in order that he might have a constant reminder of his real position before him."

"Humph!"

"Is it like your father to do a thing like that?"

"Oh, I can't say. He is a very hard man."

"And ruled Fraleigh with a rod of iron, I have no doubt. That may be the reason the man has turned on him now. Still, it explains nothing so far as our Wall street mystery is concerned."

"What are you going to do about it?"

"I am going to Fraleigh. I shall confront him with the picture, and see if I can scare him into some admission."

"You'll find him a tough subject, then."

"I have had to deal with many tough propositions in my time."

"And in the meanwhile is there anything I can do?"

"Yes. Go home and take Harry with you. You two must make an exhaustive examination of your father's private papers in the house. When that is accomplished return here."

"I can't open his safe, nor his desk, either."

"Harry will open the desk. Perhaps in it you may find some memorandum of the combination of the safe. If you don't, why, you will have to let it go."

"And you are going after Fraleigh?"

"Right now."

A few moments later Old King Brady started for the offices of Old King Copper.

A colored man challenged him in the outer office of the suite, and demanded his name and business.

Old King Brady gave up his card.

In a moment word came back that Mr. Fraleigh was engaged and could not be seen.

"I will write him a note which you will deliver," said the detective.

There was paper and envelopes on a desk, and Old King Brady simply wrote:

"Mr. Phraner: Sir.—I am the detective engaged by John H. Dodgling, Jr. You are Rogues Gallery No. 6488. It will pay you to see me without further delay.

"Old King Brady."

"Take this in, and Mr. Fraleigh will see me," he said, handing the note to the colored man.

"'Twon't be no use. He never changes his mind," replied the man, insolently.

"Take it in or I'll take you in!" said the detective sternly, with a quick display of his shield.

The darky vanished through the door.

In a moment he was back again with word that if Old King Brady would wait a minute Mr. Fraleigh would see him.

The old detective waited then, and then a stylishly dressed gentleman came out of the office.

That his face wore an anxious look Old King Brady did not fail to observe.

"Who is that man, Sam?" he asked, at the same time slipping a dollar into the darky's hand.

"He am Col. Springer," was the reply.

"A broker?"

"Yes, sah."

"Where is his office?"

"In de nex' building, sah."

"All right. I'll go in now."

Passing through the next office, where several clerks were at work, Old King Brady saw the original of the photographs standing at the open door of the private office beyond.

His face was deathly pale, but he had perfect control of his voice when he said:

"Step in here, Mr. Brady. I will see you now."

Old King Brady passed into the office, Fraleigh closing the door behind him.

Turning, he stood facing the old detective, and said:

"Well? What do you want with me?"

"An understanding, Mr. Fraleigh," replied the old detective politely. "No use beating about the bush. I should have approached my point less abruptly if you had not made it necessary for me to do otherwise."

"You have made no new discovery. My employer, Mr. Dodgling, is perfectly well aware of my criminal record. You can't blackmail me."

"Nothing is further from my intentions, I assure you."

Fraleigh pointed to the photograph.

"There is the badge of my servitude!" he exclaimed, bitterly. "It was hung up there by Old King Copper's orders, lest I forget."

"Exactly. But where is Old King Copper?"

"I don't know, and neither you nor any other living man can make me tell what I don't know."

"Mr. Fraleigh, I am the man who forced that door last night."

"So? You don't surprise me."

"What I saw in those rooms you have seen since. I am hired by young Dodgling to find his father. You may have heard enough about me to know that I am a man who always carries out what he undertakes."

"I have heard of you and your work. I have no stones to put in your way. You can do me no greater service than to find John H. Dodgling."

"Good! That's the way to talk. What is your theory of his disappearance?"

"I am not your attorney, sir. Neither am I a detective. I have no advice to give."

"Now you are on the other tack, and display very little disposition to help me find Old King Copper."

"I know nothing about him."

"You allowed that door to remain locked for three days, knowing or believing that the old man was alone in there."

"By his own orders. He is or was—he may be dead, for all I know—a hard master. He took no dictation from me whatever. In short, he treated me like a dog. I didn't murder him. I didn't take him out of the office. I

daresay you will arrest me in the end, and have me charged with his murder, and then my criminal record will be brought up against me, but I defy you to unearth one atom of proof that I had anything to do with the matter, in spite of all your detective skill."

"A long speech, and a good one, Mr. Fraleigh," replied Old King Brady calmly. "But you can't throw dust in my eyes. You have your theory, you know you have. It will pay you to talk it out."

The secretary, who was still standing, now folded his arms across his breast.

"Mr. Man," he said, "listen to me. I am speaking my last word. Say what you like, do what you please. These offices are open to you at all times, but don't try to talk with me further, for I shall not even answer you."

"You will regret taking that stand."

No answer.

"Considering your position, you are making a great mistake."

No answer.

"Very well, Mr. Fraleigh," said Old King Brady. "I'll leave you now; but remember, you are from this moment a marked man. The truth will out. Take my advice and get on the band-wagon while there is time."

No answer.

Old King Brady turned away.

But Fraleigh was ahead of him.

He flung the door open, and at the same time touched an electric bell.

The colored man appeared at the door of the other office.

"Ike," called the secretary, "admit this gentleman any time he calls. You need not even take the trouble to announce him. Let him come right in."

"Yes, sah!" grinned Ike.

Old King Brady went down on the elevator, and took his stand in the hall.

The private detective always stationed here approached him and called him by name.

"Is there anything wrong with the old man, Mr. Brady?" he asked, after a few words had been exchanged.

"Not that I know of," was the reply. "What gave you that idea?"

"Oh, he hasn't been seen outside his private rooms these three days."

"Have you asked Mr. Fraleigh about him?"

The detective grinned.

"Small use in doing that," he replied. "But I'm no fool. I—hush! Here comes Fraleigh now!"

Sure enough, the secretary had followed Old King Brady down.

He glared at the detective as he passed out through the door.

Old King Brady shot after him.

"This fellow has got to be pulled off his high horse," he thought. "We will see what effect a little shadowing has upon him."

He followed on down Wall street.

Fraleigh turned several times and saw him.

Arriving at William street, he turned South street, where he entered an old building on the left.

Old King Brady traveled up the stairs after him.

He had not reached the top of the first flight when he heard a racket on the flight above.

Someone had fallen downstairs.

It was Fraleigh!

There he lay upon the floor of the dark hall, with the blood gushing out of his mouth.

"Heavens, man! Are you hurt?" demanded the old detective, bending over him.

"Dying!"

"No, no!" cried Old King Brady, getting an arm under him. "It's only a hemorrhage. We'll bring you around."

"No! Dying! A judgment! Listen! Secret passage—Dodgling—not dead! I——"

This ended it.

Then and there James Phraner, forger, alias James Fraleigh, private secretary, died on Old King Brady's hands.

CHAPTER V.

DEATH GIVES OLD KING BRADY A CLEW.

Old King Brady had his hands full now.

The lower part of this old building was occupied by a wholesale wine dealer, and the business of the tenant on this floor was hops, with storage room above.

As yet no one had come out of the hop-dealer's office, in spite of the noise made by the dead man's fall.

Old King Brady was satisfied that Fraleigh had only come into the place for a bluff.

Hastily he went through the dead man's pockets, securing a wallet, a bunch of letters, a memorandum book, and some keys.

There was a fat roll of bills in the watch pocket, but these the old detective restored.

That the man was past hope was evident.

At his interview in Old King Copper's office the detective had put Fraleigh down as a man in consumption, for he coughed dismally, although we neglected to mention the fact.

Old King Brady opened the door of the hop-merchant's office and called out:

"There's a man dying in the hall here! Can't we bring him into your place?"

The two clerks stared.

A bewhiskered foreigner came out.

"Vell, vat peezness is it of mine?" he snarled. "Call de police. Dot's de peest vay, don'd it?"

"I am one of the police," said Old King Brady, display-

ing his shield. "Do as you like, but let someone watch him while I go for an ambulance."

"I don'd vant him in my place, den. He vas notings to me."

"Suit yourself. Who is upstairs?"

"Nobody. Dot's vere I stores my hops. But say, he looks as dough he vas dead already yet."

Old King Brady ran downstairs.

At the corner of Broad street he was lucky enough to meet the policeman on the beat.

This was a man long connected with the Old Slip station, whom Old King Brady knew very well.

"Sanders," he said, "there is a man at 224 Stone who has dropped dead on the first floor above the street. He seems to be a stranger in the building. I'll telephone for an ambulance if you will look after the case."

The officer assented, and Old King Brady hurried on his way.

Having delivered his message, the detective returned to his own office.

He had made up his mind not to mix up in the matter further.

"Strange turn of affairs," he said to himself. "If Fraleigh turns out to be innocent I shall always feel that I scared him to death.

"And even if he is guilty, it might be just the same," he added. "Queer how things get twisted sometimes."

At the office he called up Mr. Dodgling's house.

Some people may remember that gloomy old fortress just off Fifth avenue.

Here poor Jack had practically lived alone with servants ever since graduating from the military school—his father did not believe in colleges.

Somebody answered and said that Jack was there.

"Is there a gentleman with him?" demanded the old detective.

"Yes, sir."

"He is the person I want to talk to. Tell him to come to the telephone."

In a moment Old King Brady had Harry on the wire.

"How are you getting along up there?" he asked.

"We have not made any discovery except that we can't get into the safe," was the reply.

"Anything of importance in the desk?"

"Nothing but a lot of dunning letters. It looks as if Old King Copper never paid his bills."

"He is very slow pay. It takes a year to get anything out of him on private accounts, so I am told."

"You speak as if you were sure the old duffer was still alive."

"Well, I am about sure, Harry. I take it from the way you speak that Jack D. is not in the room with you."

"No; he is in the library."

"Well, you two want to give up and come down to the office as soon as possible."

"Something has happened. I can tell by your voice."

"Yes. Fraleigh is dead."

"Dead?"

"Yes; but we'll talk of it when you get here. Hurry up, now."

In spite of this injunction it was three-quarters of an hour before the young men turned up.

Jack was for taking out his automobile, but Harry was sure Old King Brady would prefer not to have the machine standing in front of his place, so they came downtown by the elevated road.

Old King Brady was sitting at his desk smoking.

"What is it all about?" demanded Jack, as soon as he entered the office.

"Fraleigh is dead, and I want you to jump right in and take charge of your father's affairs," said the old detective.

He told of the interview and its tragic termination.

"I always thought he had consumption," said Jack. "He has coughed terribly for the past year, but he claimed his lungs were sound."

"That's what he died of undoubtedly, but there was probably some heart trouble mixed with it. Before I left I secured his keys, his memorandum book, and some letters. I will read you two of the latter now."

Producing a letter, Old King Brady read as follows:

"New York, May, —.

"Dear Jim: Springer was here again to-night. Acting under your instructions, I pumped him for all I was worth. There is surely something in the wind. He said: 'Just wait a few days, and you will see a twist in the copper market which will surprise you. If it goes as I think it will yours truly will be a couple of millions to the good.'

"As the rest of his remarks were mere gush, I will spare you. I asked him when he had seen Old King Copper. I said I heard that the old man had disappeared. 'Whoever told you that is a liar,' he answered, 'for I saw him only to-day.' Jim, they have got him locked in somewhere sure. You want to get next while there is time. Do take care of that cough of yours, dear, and——"

But the rest of this letter was certainly mere gush.

The signature was: "Your loving Slyvia."

"Now, who can the writer be?" Jack asked.

"The address is No. — W. 38th street, as you can see," said Old King Brady. "That is all I know."

"Easy traced up," said Harry.

"Your job," added the old detective, tossing over the letter. "Now, listen to this. It is on the business paper of Col. Tom Springer."

"A broker my father often employed!" cried Jack.

"Just so," replied the old detective. "Now, listen.

"Dear Fraleigh: I have yours of yesterday. It seems to me that you overestimate the value of the very slight service you have performed in not disturbing Old King Copper in his den. The man is all right, and in due time

will reappear; but it may be a day or two yet. When I paid you ten thousand dollars to say nothing and do nothing it seemed to me that you were fully compensated, and now you are demanding more, and refuse to talk over the phone, and won't see me, but will insist that I put my name to paper. Well, I have done it, so you see how little I fear your threats. I know your record, so you can't blackmail me. Nevertheless, if you will keep your mouth shut, within twenty-four hours I'll put you wise on a turn in copper stocks which will make your \$10,000 as many \$100,000, so there. Do different and you get dumped, and by heavens I'll railroad you back to Sing Sing, or my name is not
Thomas Springer."

"Great Scott!" cried Jack. "Has this man and his confederates got my father a prisoner somewhere, then?"

"There can be no doubt of it," replied Old King Brady. "Now, boys, we must get busy. I'm afraid we can't keep this matter out of the papers any longer. Fraleigh's death will spoil that."

"What shall I do?" demanded Jack.

"Get to the office as quick as possible. Assert yourself. Take charge of affairs. If reporters call tell them frankly that your father is missing, and that the case is in the hands of the Bradys. Give them no details of any kind, and caution that man Black, superintendent of the building, to be equally reticent."

"His name is White, Mr. Brady, and I am afraid my influence over him won't amount to much."

"It will under the circumstances, my boy, and you will find it so. Now go, and don't leave the office until I come."

Jack got right out, and the Bradys went into secret session, so to speak.

"This is a strange turn of affairs, Governor," said Harry.

"It is, indeed. We now know Fraleigh to have been only a poor tool in the hands of some desperate gang of Wall street crooks."

"Among these papers have you found any allusion to a secret passage between the two buildings?"

"No; yet I have Fraleigh's statement that there is one."

"It seems scarcely credible."

"I don't see it so at all. Old King Copper put up both buildings. He may, for reasons of his own, have had such a passage made. He may have secret rooms in the next building which he used for his own purposes, and there he may be confined now."

"Oh, that puts a different face on the proposition."

"Of course, Harry, it is not to be imagined that the crooks constructed a secret passage for the purpose of capturing the old man."

"That's what I was thinking."

"On the other hand, it is entirely within the bounds of possibility that Old King Copper, foreseeing that in the end lawsuits must grow out of his crooked deals, should have constructed such a passage for his own use, so that he could dodge process servers, which seems to be the

principal occupation of some of these multimillionaires nowadays."

"If it is so then it is up to us to find it."

"Right you are, and it will be a disgrace if we fan down on such a proposition."

"You propose to make another try at it, of course?"

"I certainly do, and that to-night."

"And about this Sylvia?"

"You get up to that house, and get an interview with her if you can. Tell her that Fraleigh is dead, and—well, tell her any old thing, I don't care what it is, so long as you get there—see?"

"All right. I'll do my best. Better go now, I suppose?"

"Yes. Evening would perhaps be best, but we just can't wait."

"I daresay I shall be able to manage it. Are you going to see this man Springer?"

"I have already seen him."

"So?"

"Yes."

"When and where?"

"Coming out of Old King Copper's office, where he had been holding an interview with Fraleigh."

"If you could only have heard what was said!"

"It might not have done me any good. You can see by the letter that Fraleigh was not fully in the plot."

"Well, I'll be off," said Harry, and he left the office.

"What about Sylvia?" he muttered, as he ran downstairs.

That remained to be seen.

CHAPTER VI.

YOUNG KING BRADY SCORES A SUCCESS WITH SYLVIA SNOW.

Harry found, as he expected, that the number on West 35th street was a theatrical boarding-house.

This confirmed the impression he had already received.

"It is Sylvia Snow, as sure as fate," he said to himself.

The allusion was to a then popular actress performing at the Gayety Theater.

So certain was Harry of this that he rang the bell, and boldly inquired for Miss Snow of the colored man who appeared in answer.

"Yo' hef ter send up yer keard, boss," said the man.

"Miss Snow is in, then?"

"Dunno nuffin about it. I'll take up your keard."

"Haven't any. Tell her that Mr. Fraleigh sent me here."

"Ho! In dat case it am all right, boss. Walk right in," said the darky.

He threw open the door of a shabby parlor, and Harry entered.

Cheap prints adorned the walls, the furniture coverings were in ribbons.

Seated at the piano, screeching the latest "Mother" song, was a young lady with yellow hair and red cheeks, dressed in a pink kimona, while lolling on the sofa, with hands in his pockets and his legs stretched out, was a smooth-shaven gentleman smoking a cigarette.

Both stared at Harry as he seated himself at the other end of the room.

The young man said something to the young woman, whereupon they both laughed, and the latter began to sing:

"I wish I was a detective."

"The penalty of greatness," thought Young King Brady. "This is an infliction. I only hope that Miss Snow don't insist upon talking here."

A moment later and the darky thrust his head in at the door.

"Dis way, sah!" he called. "Miss Snow will see you now."

His recognition by the young woman at the piano had given Young King Brady his cue.

It was useless to try to conceal his identity, therefore the next best thing was to make the most of it.

He was shown to a room on the third floor, where a young woman met him who was the very duplicate of the beauty at the piano, except for the kimona.

"Miss Snow?" said Harry, with his best bow.

"That's me!" cried the actress. "Don't be bashful. Come right in."

Harry entered.

"Shut the door, Peter!" called Miss Snow. "If anybody else calls tell them I am engaged."

"I am a detective, Miss Snow," began Harry, when he was rudely interrupted.

"Oh, cut out the preliminaries!" cried Miss Snow. "I know you well enough. Young King Brady. What's the matter with Jim Fraleigh? Has he been arrested? Say?"

"Yes, miss," replied Harry, putting on a grave face.

"And for what?"

"Pardon me. Mr. Fraleigh is a friend of yours, I believe?"

"Yes; we are engaged to be married. He's the best friend I've got. Out with it."

"But you must prepare yourself for something of a shock."

"What! Oh, you can't shock me, young fellow. Do speak out."

"It is not the police who have arrested Mr. Fraleigh."

"Not the police? What the mischief do you mean?"

"He has been arrested by the hand of death."

Miss Snow gave one fell shriek, and fainted, or pretended to; Harry could not decide whether the fit was real or not.

Coming out of it in a moment, she went into wild hys-

teries, and Young King Brady had his hands full for the next ten minutes.

He would have called help, but the actress positively forbade it.

At last she quieted down sufficiently to listen, and Harry told her the circumstances of Fraleigh's death.

Having once started on that road, Miss Snow got better very fast.

"It was awfully good of you to come to me, Mr. Brady," she said, smiling at Harry. "Poor Jim! He would not see a doctor. I always told him that that cough of his would be the death of him some day. Well, we have all got to go some time. I suppose it can't be helped."

"That is true," replied Harry. "But it is my opinion, and also that of my chief, Old King Brady, that Fraleigh was hounded to his death by a man who should have stood his friend. There is such a thing as avenging him. That's why I am here."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean Colonel Tom Springer. Do you want to help?"

Miss Snow looked alarmed.

"What in the world are you driving at?" she demanded.

"Oh, come," said Harry. "We have been looking into this matter. We know the deal Springer is engaged in. We have read some of Fraleigh's private papers, including your last letter, and——"

"I think you are a mean, nasty, horrid thing to read my letters!" cried Miss Snow. "How dare you? Col. Springer is nothing to me. I——"

"We are aware of that," broke in Young King Brady. "We are also aware that he treated Fraleigh shamefully. He will be arrested anyway, so if you can give me a pointer as to who his associates are in this deal against Old King Copper there is your chance to get square with him for the way he has treated Fraleigh. It is up to you."

"Will I be dragged into the courts?"

"I promise you not."

"Well, I know Tom Springer, but he is nothing to me. I was engaged to Jim Fraleigh."

"So you said. Is it a go?"

"Yes; it is. But it is mighty little that I can tell you."

"Much or little, so long as you help us out. Understand, Springer is a dead one. There is no sort of chance of his deal going through."

"You know what that deal is?"

"Sure."

"Then you know more than I do. All I know is that there is a deal, and he expects to make a pot of money out of it."

"What we want is to get at the names of his associates. Can you give me any clew?"

Miss Snow looked wise.

"Perhaps I can," she said.

"Then the next question is, will you?"

"I might; but where do I come in?"

"That depends."

"Upon what?"

"Upon how valuable your information proves."

"Suppose it was very valuable? Suppose I could give you the whole list of names?"

"In that case it might be worth as much as fifty dollars."

"Fifty nothings! What do you take me for?"

"For a lady who knows a good thing when she sees it."

"You bet I do."

"Then don't put your price too high, or there will be nothing doing."

"You don't believe my information amounts to much, Brady?"

"I have your word for that, Miss Snow."

"Well, I'll prove to you that you are wrong. Look here."

The actress arose, and going to a dresser, took out a memorandum-book from the top drawer.

"There!" she exclaimed. "Tom Springer dropped this last time he was here. It is his private memorandum book. I confess that I am not up on business enough to make very much out of it, but I am sure you will find what you want between its covers. Now, what is your bid?"

"Miss Snow," replied Harry, "I never buy a pig in a poke, but on the other hand I am a square man. If the information in that book is of any value at all to me it is worth a hundred dollars—no more, no less, and you'll get the price right now. But I must look into that book before I decide."

"Oh, don't talk rubbish. It's worth five times what you say."

"It may be so. There are other ways of getting at it."

"What other way?"

"Well, for instance, I might arrest you for being in the conspiracy."

"You wouldn't dare!"

"Remember, I have your letters, Miss Snow. They contain proof enough."

"Oh, take the old thing!" cried the actress, tossing the book to Harry. "I suppose you will even cheat me out of my hundred. That's the way with your kind."

Harry caught the book deftly.

"Out on the first base!" laughed Miss Snow. "Hurry up and read it now, and cash in if you are going to. for I've got to get busy if I am to go on to-night."

Harry started in on the book.

Hastily running over its pages, he came to the following entry:

"Syndicate in the copper deal:

"J. T. Mullens.

E. H. Bagg.

Chas. F. Wensley.
W. J. Henderson.
B. C. Brown.
H. Swartheimer.
T. Q. Fenton.
J. McMahon.
R. Levi."

If these names actually referred to the plot against Old King Copper, then here was the very thing the Bradys wanted.

It seemed almost too good to be true.

Harry ran on further in the book.

There were various entries which seemed to refer to the affair.

Of course, it was a case of piecing together fragments.

But to Harry it seemed plain enough that the scheme was to force Old King Copper to put a certain amount of his valuable copper stocks on the market, and so depress the price that this precious syndicate could buy up the shares away below their real value. The rest was easy to guess at.

The price would be forced up, and the conspirators would sell out at a profit of several millions.

During the reading Sylvia Snow sat quietly watching.

Harry had sized her up correctly.

She was a woman without heart, who was perfectly willing to sell out her friends when she thought it to her interest to do so.

Harry closed the book at last, and put it in his pocket.

"Does that mean it's a go?" demanded the girl.

"Yes," replied Young King Brady, "and here is your cash."

Producing a roll of bills, Harry counted out a hundred dollars, and handed it to Miss Snow.

"I won't say thank you, for it don't begin to be enough," said the actress, "and what's more, I want you to distinctly understand that you wouldn't have got it at all only for the reason that I hate Tom Springer, and want to be square with him for driving poor Jim so hard."

"Oh, I understand," replied Harry. "But look here; it is supposed to be a lady's privilege to change her mind. Look out you don't change yours, and talk, for if you do—well, a word to the wise, you know. It won't pay you to come up against the Bradys. That's all."

"Don't you fret yourself," sneered Miss Snow. "I'm no fool. Just the same, if you win out in your case, and scoop in a big reward from Old King Copper, there ought to be another hundred coming to me."

"Perhaps," laughed Harry. "I'm off now. Good-by."

"So long," replied Miss Snow. "Come and see me again, and don't forget to bring that other hundred with you, or I shan't be home when you call."

"What luck!" thought Harry, as he hurried toward Broadway. "We ought to be able out of a list of ten

names to find one man who can be made to give the snap away; but just the same it wouldn't surprise me a bit if the Governor made no use of that list, except to go for these fellows after Old King Copper is found. It will be of no use then, at all events."

He returned to the office and found Old King Brady there.

"That's all right," said the old detective, after Harry had made his report. "The list will be worth the price; in fact, I think you got it cheap."

"And now what's the plan?" demanded Harry. "We know so much that it seems to me it might almost pay to arrest Springer."

"Not until after to-night," was the reply.

"And what is on for to-night?"

"We want to find that secret passage, Harry. It must be done, and to-night is the time I propose to turn the trick."

"You will stop in the offices to-night, then?"

"Yes."

"And Jack Dodgling?"

"Oh, I'm going to send him home. You and I can work better alone."

"I think that would be best. Jack is a good fellow, but he is too excitable. We can work better alone."

It was now getting late, and the Bradys went down to the Dodgling Building to learn what Jack had to report.

CHAPTER VII.

WORKING ON WALL STREET.

The Bradys found Jack alone in his father's private office.

"Well, how have you been making out?" Old King Brady asked.

"I can't say that I have done anything more than to sit here in solemn state," was the reply.

"How did the office take Fraleigh's death?"

"Well, of course, all hands professed to be dreadfully shocked, but I believe that every man of them is actually glad he is gone."

"It's often the way."

"Well, it is the way here, and I believe they would be still more relieved if they knew my father was not coming back; that is, always providing their salaries continued just the same."

"Just so," replied Old King Brady. "Did any reporters call?"

"No, not one."

"It is not too late yet. Perhaps Fraleigh's remains were not identified. I took away his papers. It wouldn't surprise me if that is the how of it."

"Let it rest till morning. But we can easily ascertain how the case stands."

Old King Brady went to the telephone, and called up the Old Slip police station.

"It is as I thought," he said, when he turned away from the phone.

"There has been no identification. The body is in the Morgue."

"I noticed that you did not tell them anything," said Jack.

"No; as I said, we will let it rest until morning, and now, Mr. Dodgling, you had better go home. We shall remain here to-night."

"With the idea of finding this supposed secret passage?"

"Yes; it is real. Fraleigh confessed to it with his dying breath. A man don't lie at a time like that."

"Shall I stay with you? Why not?"

"Frankly, we had rather put the night in alone."

"Oh, very well. Just as you say."

"It will be best. Let us call up the watchman, and arrange for our admission to the building later on."

McManus was summoned, and the Bradys explained.

It was now half-past four o'clock.

"We may go out before the building is closed," said Old King Brady. "If so, we will give you the five rings on our return."

"All right, sir," replied McManus. "I shall be on hand."

Jack left with the watchman, and the Bradys having obtained his key, passed through to the private rooms.

"What we want to do, Harry, is to see what is on the other side of this wall before the building next door closes," said Old King Brady. "Now let us have a look."

He opened the window at the end of the suite, and leaned out.

"There is a window there," he announced, "and that would seem as if there must be an office which is in use. No secret room, at all events."

"The windows seem to be on a level with those of this building," said Harry, craning his neck so as to get a look over the old detective's shoulder.

"Yes. That would bring it on the 12th story. Come, let's go in there and see what's doing."

They locked up the offices and went down on Wall street.

Entering the next building, where the elevator was still running, they were taken up to the 12th floor.

"Last office on the right," said Old King Brady. "Now let's see. Ha! No name on the door, nor on the next this way, but here we have Col. Tom Springer's offices, all right."

The word was scarcely uttered when the door of the Springer office opened, and the colonel himself, accompanied by another man, came out.

Col. Springer threw a searching glance at Old King Brady, and paused.

"Were you looking for anyone?" he asked.

"He knows me," thought the old detective.

"He knows him," thought Harry. "Confound the luck! The Governor's trademark clothes are a regular give-away."

"Oh, Mr. Springer, I believe?" said Old King Brady, producing a pair of eye-glasses, and fixing them upon his nose.

"That's my name. You have the advantage of me," was the cool reply.

"Oh, indeed! Yes, I supposed it was your name, for I saw it on your sign. Was I looking for anyone? Oh, yes, for a Mr. Goldhammer. I had the address, room 1244, but there I see no sign."

"Those two rooms are private. There is no Goldhammer on this floor," replied Springer, and followed by the other man, he walked to the elevator and rang.

Old King Brady entered right behind him, Harry following.

They walked up Wall street.

Springer and his companion turned into Nassau street, but the Bradys turned down Broad.

Not until they were out of sight of the broker did either speak.

"Come, that's the time we were caught!" Harry then remarked.

"It is certainly a bit unfortunate," said Old King Brady. "But it can make no real difference in the end."

"I think he knew you."

"And I am sure of it. I'd like to know who that fellow was with him."

"Do you think he knew who you were, or only recognized you as the man he saw in Fraleigh's office this morning?"

"Oh, I think he knew me both times, as far as that goes."

"Strange."

"What is?"

"That he should know you so readily."

"Shut up! No more of your impudence!" retorted the old detective, now realizing that Harry's remarks were leading up to the old joke about his trademark clothes.

"What are you going to do?" demanded Young King Brady.

"Going back. I want to see the watchman or janitor or superintendent of that building, whatever the caretaker calls himself."

They returned and were fortunate enough to meet the "superintendent," for such was the janitor's title, in the lower hall.

To this man the old detective introduced himself.

"Who has the rear offices on the right on the twelfth floor?" he asked.

"Those are private, sir," was the reply.

"Private for Springer & Co.?"

"No, sir. They are reserved by Mr. Dodgling, the owner of the building."

"For what purpose?"

"For his own use when he wants to use them. My

orders are not to tell this to anybody, but I understand why you ask."

"Oh, you do!" exclaimed the old detective. "And what do you understand, then?"

"That you are working for Mr. Dodgling, sir; that something has gone wrong with the old gentleman."

"That is a fact. But, look here, we are trying to keep this business a profound secret. Who told you, now, that this is on?"

"Mr. White, who is superintendent next door."

"Oh! In that case if it is just between yourself and Mr. White, there is no harm done. Now, mister, let me see, what is your name again?"

"Robbins."

"Oh, yes. Now, Mr. Robbins, I want to have a look inside those offices."

"I can't help you, Mr. Brady. I have no means of getting in there unless I break in. I am willing to do that if you say the word."

"You are certainly very accommodatng, but I don't care to break in."

"Something ought to be done. I told Mr. Fraleigh so yesterday."

"We are doing all that should be done. Now tell me all about those offices."

"There is nothing more to tell. Mr. Dodgling uses them at times; that is all I know."

"They are on the other side of the hall from his private rooms next door?"

"I so understand. I was never in the rooms next door."

"Nor in there?"

"No."

"Did it ever occur to you that there might be a secret passage from one set of offices to the other?"

"I have thought so, yes."

"But you don't know it?"

"No."

"What gave you the idea?"

"Because I have seen Mr. Dodgling come out of those offices many times, but I never saw him go in."

"A very strong reason. Will you go upstairs with me? Perhaps I can find a way of opening the door."

"Certainly. I will do whatever you wish?" said Mr. Robbins, and upstairs they went.

"You see, Mr. Brady," remarked the superintendent, "there is no keyhole here. You can't open the door except from the inside."

He took hold of the knob and shook the door.

"It is the same with the other office," he added.

"Any door communicating with Col. Springer's offices?" Old King Brady asked.

"No."

"The only way we could get a look in there is to cut out the glass or force the door."

"That's it."

"Mr. Robbins," said the old detective, "have you been away any night this week?"

"Yes, I was away Monday night."

"Who took your place?"

"No one. I am not on duty at night. We have a watchman for that work, same as they do next door."

"I see. Is he in the building now?"

"No; he don't live in the building. I do. It's just the other way next door."

"I see. Have you full confidence in this watchman?"

"Just the opposite. I have no confidence in him whatever. I believe him to be a rascal. I have told Mr. Dodgling so several times."

"And still he kept him on?"

"Yes; he would not hear to the man's being discharged."

"What is his name?"

"Gus Dawling."

"I must interview Mr. Gus Dawling, but in the meantime say nothing to him about this business. You haven't done so, I hope?"

"Not a word."

Old King Brady now opened the end window in the hall and climbed out.

When he closed the window at the end of Mr. Dodgling's private suite he hung a towel out and shut the sash upon it.

There was the towel in the window on a line with the window of the closed office.

"There you are, Harry," remarked the old detective; "we have located the other side all right, and there is mystery here, too, you see."

"What do you think about it all, Mr. Brady?" demanded Robbins.

"Well, to you I say that I believe there has been foul play of some kind," was the reply.

"It seems so to me. Do you suspect any one?"

"We have not got that far in the case yet, but if you have any suspicions I should be pleased to hear them."

"Well, I can't say I have."

As he spoke the superintendent seemed involuntarily to fix his eyes upon Col. Springer's name painted on the office door.

"You are thinking of Col. Springer," said Old King Brady.

"You must be something of a mind reader, then. I confess I was."

"What sort of a man is the Colonel?"

"Oh, it is not for me to say."

"But you must say what you think."

"Well, then, I don't like him, and there is no reason why I should."

"Do you know anything against him?"

"He did me out of \$2,000 a year ago."

"In a stock transaction?"

"Yes."

"How?"

"I gave him that amount to speculate with. He claimed to have put it on a stock which tumbled all to pieces within twenty-four hours and wiped my margin out. I don't believe he ever placed the money at all."

"A serious charge, Mr. Robbins."

"That's what it is, and it is one I can't prove, so there you are."

"Have you ever heard of any one else having a similar experience with the Colonel?"

"Yes, I know two parties whom he did up the same way."

"But he could hardly catch Old King Copper by any such ancient game?"

"Well, I should say not!"

"But, on the other hand, a man who is a cinch in one thing may be in another. I think with you, Mr. Robbins, that Col. Springer will bear watching. But we must be going. Keep mum on all this now."

The superintendent repeated his promise, and the Bradys left the building.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BRADYS BETRAYED.

"The evidence is gathering by leaps and bounds, Governor," remarked Harry, as they entered the Dodgling building.

"It is indeed," replied Old King Brady. "I think under the circumstances we will go right to work and not wait for night."

"It is after five now."

"Exactly. If we could finish right up we could go to supper and get a good night's rest."

"You don't expect to have it so easy?"

"Frankly, I don't. But we shall see what we shall see."

The elevator was making its last trip when it carried the Bradys up.

The detectives entered the Dodgling offices and locked themselves in.

Going into the bedroom, they began their search there.

"You will perceive, Harry," remarked Old King Brady, "that this room is opposite the first of those closed offices."

"I see. The sitting-room, or whatever you like to call it, adjoins Springer's private office."

"Yes. So it lies between this room and the little bedroom occupied by the Japanese valet."

"Exactly. Shall I tackle the problem in there?"

"You may as well. I can work alone here well enough."

The Bradys have ways of their own of finding out secret panels and all that sort of thing.

Their scheme is to take a section of wall and examine every inch of it.

It is very seldom that anything escapes them.

The examination already made had been a hurried one and counted for nothing.

For the best part of an hour they continued their work. They were still at it when there came a loud knocking on the door.

Old King Brady hurried to open it and found McManus, the watchman, and Mr. Robbins outside.

"May I see you a moment, Mr. Brady?" asked the superintendent.

"Certainly," replied the old detective. "Come right in."

"I am so relieved to find you here," said Robbins, after the door was closed. "I came into the building just as a flyer and asked McManus if you were likely to come here to-night, and he told me you were already here."

"Yes, we propose to remain here for some time. What is it you wish?"

"I want to tell you that about half an hour ago Colonel Springer came to the gate and rang the bell. He asked me if he could use his office during the evening, saying that he and some friends wanted to hold a private meeting."

"And you consented?"

"Yes. He paid me, of course. This is sometimes done."

"I see."

"And his friends followed him?"

"Yes, they are all in now, nine all told."

"So? Do you know any of them?"

"I know two, Mr. Wensley and Mr. Levi, of Levi & Meyer."

"Good! They are in Springer's office now?"

"Yes."

"Thank you very much, Mr. Robbins. This may help us."

"I shall be glad if it does. Of course, I don't know what you are about here, but I can guess."

"Well?"

"Looking for some secret way into Old King Copper's private offices next door?"

"When the case is finished up, Mr. Robbins, I'll let you know how close you came to it."

"Oh, that's all right. I don't want to butt in."

"We are very much obliged."

Mr. Robbins withdrew and Old King Brady resumed his work.

Harry came into the bedroom wanting to know about the superintendent.

"Looks as if we might come up against the gang in case we succeed in getting in there," he remarked.

"It does, indeed!" said Old King Brady.

"What are you going to do about it?"

"Oh, nothing now. We will find the secret door first. How near have you got through with your wall?"

"I'm all through with the wall part. There is a closet to be examined yet."

"Come on; we will look that closet over together. The secret may lie there."

They passed on to the Japanese valet's little room.

The closet was certainly a peculiar affair, for it was built into the party wall of the building.

There were many coats and hats hanging up in there when Old King Brady examined it on the previous occasion.

Therefore his attention had not been called to its unusual depth.

"Humph!" he muttered. "Well, I guess you have hit it, Harry."

"I am inclined to think so. The party wall must have been cut away to let that closet in."

"And such a thing would never have been done without some powerful motive."

"Exactly. Go ahead and see what you can make out of it."

"Just a minute, Governor."

"Well?"

"Don't it strike you that our friend, Mr. Robbins, is a little too friendly?"

"It certainly does. I was wanting to hear you speak out."

"That last tip of his was a bird. I believe he is trying to lure us into some trap."

"He is a double-dealing fellow beyond all doubt, but whether he is simply trying to hedge in case Old King Copper should suddenly turn up and send us all about our business, or whether he is actually trying to put us into a hole I haven't the least idea."

"We had better be on our guard."

"I am always that, Harry. Always! Never make any mistake on that score; but go on and see if you can start anything up."

Harry entered the closet, while Old King Brady, lighting a cigar, stood watching him.

This is the old detective's style.

He always puts Harry forward where he has the chance, although sometimes he will call him down pretty well in private.

Young King Brady had not been at it two minutes when a click was heard and the back of the closet was seen to move.

"Ha! so you have found it!" breathed the old detective. "Hush! Not an unnecessary sound now!"

"It's a button in the floor. All you have to do is to tread on it!" whispered Harry.

"It's all right," replied Old King Brady. "The thing moves on greased pivots. Good enough!"

The whole back of the closet swung around as Harry pushed it.

When straightened out one could walk through into another closet.

There were clothes hooks on both sides of this peculiar partition.

On the north side were old coats and trousers hanging.

Beyond was a door.

Thus it will be seen that there was a clothes closet in both buildings, and this revolving partition formed the secret passage between the two.

Old King Brady turned out the electric light and brought his dark lantern into play.

"Now we are up against it," he whispered, "and we want to go almighty slow."

Harry passed through into the other closet and tried the door.

It yielded readily to his touch.

He threw back the door and the detectives breathlessly waited.

Not a sound could be heard.

Old King Brady passed through on one side of the partition, Harry going on the other.

"Here we are!" whispered the old detective. "We've got the place to ourselves at all events."

They had penetrated to Old King Copper's inner sanctum at last.

Old King Brady flashed his lantern about.

The rooms were the duplicate of the suite in the Dodgling building, except that there was no sitting-room nor any small sleeping-room.

The room they had entered was a kitchen.

The one beyond was a bedroom, comfortably furnished.

There was every facility for cooking over gas, plenty of dishes, table linen, et cetera.

In the bedroom was a small safe and a desk, both of which were locked.

It was simply a second retreat for the old Copper King.

In a closet in the bedroom were wigs and beards and various suits of clothes to help out a disguise.

Nothing appeared to have been disturbed.

"The sly old fox!" whispered Old King Brady. "Even if it came to detectives being after him, he would have been safe enough here so long as he could trust his man Robbins. But not a bit longer, Harry—mark that."

"Just the same these rooms may have proved his undoing."

"Right! They only add to the mystery. Now, listen. I don't hear a sound in Springer's office."

"Nor I. If there is a meeting going on in there it must be of the Quaker order."

"The partition may be unusually thick."

"It may be so, but just the same I don't believe it. There should be some sign of life."

They listened intently for as much as five minutes, but not a sound was heard.

"I think we will venture out and look up Mr. Robbins," said Old King Brady. "The spring which controls this door works easily enough from this side."

"I take it that Dodgling never went in this way and never went out the other when he used these rooms."

"Perhaps. Still he may have had some way of opening the door."

Old King Brady opened it himself as he spoke.

They now found themselves in the hall on the twelfth floor, where they had encountered Col. Springer.

It was not yet dark. The darkness in the secret rooms had been on account of heavy curtains which concealed the windows.

Just as the old detective was about to give his attention to the Springer door he heard footsteps approaching at the other end of the hall.

"Hush!" breathed Harry. "Some one is coming."

"I hear," replied Old King Brady. "Come ahead."

It was only Mr. Robbins.

He threw up his hands when he caught sight of them and appeared immensely surprised.

"Well, well!" he exclaimed, "so you did manage to get through. This is great!"

"Yes, here we are!" replied Old King Brady.

"And you found the secret passage?"

"Yes."

"Good!"

"How about that?"

Old King Brady jerked his thumb in the direction of the Springer door.

"They have gone. They were gone when I got back," the superintendent replied.

"A short session?"

"Yes, so it seems."

"Well, we are through here for the present, Mr. Robbins."

"You found no trace of Mr. Dodgling in there?"

"None whatever."

"I see that you have left the door ajar. Can I go in? I am curious to see what sort of a place Old King Copper has in there."

"Why, certainly!" replied Old King Brady. "The building is in your charge. It is not for us to say where you shall or shall not go."

He turned back and threw open the door.

Mr. Robbins went through the two rooms, looking at everything curiously.

"So this is his holy of holies?" he said, sneeringly. "Don't look as if he had been here lately, though."

"It certainly does not," replied the old detective. "But the discovery of the secret passage between the two buildings puts a different face on the affair."

"And how?"

"Why, simply that there is nothing to hinder the old man from locking himself in next door and going out this way. There is no telling where he may have gone to or what may have happened to him now."

"That is so."

"So you see how the case stands, Mr. Robbins. Shall we close the door?"

"No, leave it open, please. I wish, though, you would show me how the secret spring on the dividing door works."

"Certainly," replied the old detective. "Just step here."

He made all plain to Mr. Robbins, and, having closed the secret door, they returned to the building in which the Springer offices were located.

"You may let us out this way, if you will, Mr. Robbins," said the old detective. "We shall not follow this case up any longer to-night."

"Won't you join me in a glass of wine, gentlemen?" asked the superintendent. "My office is right here on this floor."

"Thank you, no," replied Old King Brady. "We must be on the move."

"But just come in and see my den. You can take a cigar, at all events."

The invitation was carelessly given.

Mr. Robbins's manner reads more insistent than it sounded to the Bradys then.

The superintendent led them to the other end of the corridor and opened a door.

"Walk right in, gentlemen," he said in a loud voice.

And the Bradys stepped inside to find themselves confronted by three masked men, who thrust revolvers in their faces.

"Move an inch and you are dead ones!" the taller of the trio exclaimed.

CHAPTER IX.

THE CAPTURE OF THE BRADYS.

Although in a measure prepared for something of this very sort, the Bradys were taken by surprise.

If Robbins had suggested going into the Springer offices Old King Brady would have hesitated.

But on the door of this office the words "Superintendent of Buildings" were plainly painted.

Thus it was the most natural thing in the world that the detectives should have acted in the way they did.

"Ah, Mr. Robbins!" cried Old King Brady, in deeply sarcastic tones, "so you are a traitor to your employer! I expected this!"

"Hold your tongue, you old fiend!" cried another of the men.

He held in his hand a short riding whip—the sort called a "crop," which he snapped viciously about Old King Brady's head.

No answer came to the old detective's remark.

He heard the door slam behind him and he rightly concluded that Robbins had taken himself off.

And here were the detectives in the clutches of the Copper conspirators at last.

One of the men was dressed like a gentleman, but he of the whip and the other wore coarser clothing.

Their masks consisted simply of pocket handkerchiefs with eyeholes, tied over their faces.

"Tie these men up!" cried the one who had acted as spokesman. "Be quick about it, too."

"Wait!" interposed Old King Brady. "Allow me to say, gentlemen——"

"Hold!" cried the spokesman; "not another word or you are dead ones! Don't think that we shall hesitate to kill you! There are millions involved in this deal, and we propose to have them—see? Nothing shall be allowed to stand in our way."

"Oh! It is as serious as that, is it?"

"Once more I warn you! Utter another word until you are told to speak, and your hours are numbered!"

Clearly it was a time for keeping quiet.

The Bradys took the hint and maintained silence.

The two masks got busy then, the spokesman keeping them covered all the while, a revolver in each hand.

The detectives were now not only securely tied but were fastened back to back.

In addition to this, handkerchiefs were tied over their mouths.

This accomplished, the revolvers were lowered and the spokesman threw open the door.

"Forward, march!" he cried.

But it was no easy matter to march.

The Bradys' legs were tied together.

Their queer, shuffling gait when they attempted to walk was absurd and they made no headway at all.

"March!" shouted the man with the whip, and he brought it down over the detectives' shoulders.

One can do a good deal when forced to it.

The detectives managed to waddle after the spokesman, who led them to the door of Col. Tom Springer's office.

Here a double knock was given and the door flew open.

Through the opening the detectives could see a number of men similarly masked seated in chairs.

The Bradys were marched into the masked assemblage, tied back to back, the man with the whip standing guard.

"Gentlemen," said the mask who met them, "let me introduce the most notorious of butters-in and spies—the Bradys!"

As the spokesman said this the fellow behind again brought his whip down upon Old King Brady's head and followed up his cruelty by giving Harry a cut.

But the detectives bore it like Trojans.

Not a sound escaped them.

"Enough of that!" cried one of the masks in the chairs.

"You have begun your work well, and we are prepared to put the deal through, as arranged, but we want no unnecessary cruelty. Don't use that whip again."

Then there was silence for a few moments.

This gave the detectives a chance to look about them.

The windows here were obscured by heavy curtains, and the electric light was turned on.

The office paraphernalia had been pushed to one side to make room for the chairs.

The Bradys stood awaiting their fate.

At last the man spoke again.

This time his voice was even more like that of Col. Tom Springer than it had been before.

Old King Brady felt satisfied that he knew with whom he had to deal.

"Mr. Brady—you, the old one, I mean——" said the mask, "you have run a long career in this town, but it is at an end. When you took up with this case of Old King Copper your own judgment should have told you that you were probably bucking powerful interests. I'm surprised at a man of your experience being such a fool."

Of course, there was no answer.

Old King Brady found himself powerless to speak.

"There is just one chance that we may be able to spare your life," continued the man, "and only one. What that chance is I am not prepared to state now. Were it otherwise you would go out of this room a corpse instead of a living man. I advise you, however, to prepare for death, for it is not likely that your lives can be safely spared."

There was another pause, during which the man conferred with his next neighbor in whispers.

"You had better find out," Old King Brady heard the other say.

"Remove the gag from Old King Brady," said the speaker then.

This was done.

"Now, Mr. Brady," said the mask, "you have discovered the secret door between these two buildings. Let me ask you, does Jack Dodgling know?"

"He does not."

"Thank you for your prompt reply. It will pay you to be frank. Does Jack believe his father dead?"

"He neither believes nor disbelieves."

"I understand that James Fraleigh died suddenly to-day?"

"It is so."

"And that you were with him at the time of his death."

"Yes."

"State the details briefly, if you please."

Under circumstances like these Old King Brady adopted the plan of seeming to chime in with the enemy.

He did it now and told without reserve the circumstances of Fraleigh's death.

"Thank you," said the mask. "Now, one question more; or, rather, two, as I shall put it. Has Jack Dodgling gone over his father's private papers?"

"He has not been able to do so to any extent, as Mr. Dodgling's private safe is locked, and the son has not the combination."

"But outside of the safe he has examined what he could find?"

"Yes."

"Did he find the old man's will?"

"My partner was with him at the time. I do not know. Answer, Harry, if you have anything to say."

"Remove the young man's gag," said the mask.

It was done, and Harry answered "No."

"That, I believe, is all," said the mask, looking at his watch.

"May I say a word?" demanded Old King Brady.

"Not one, unless you wish to die," was the reply.

The handkerchiefs were then again tied over the detectives' mouths.

The masks now retired to the inner office with the exception of the man with the whip, and his companion.

These two Old King Brady had already concluded were of a different sort, and not brokers belonging to this secret league.

If it had been in his power the old detective would have appealed to them.

The handkerchiefs were so tightly tied, however, that he could not utter an audible sound.

A tedious wait of the best part of an hour followed.

Then at last there came a sharp rap on the door.

The man with the whip opened it, and Mr. Robbins stepped in.

He grinned sarcastically at the Bradys, and said:

"Is the boss inside?"

"He is. Do you want to see him?" replied the man with the whip.

"Yes."

"I'll tell him."

"Mr. Robbins asking for you, sir," he said when the door was opened after a respectful knock.

"These are two toughs or two private detectives who have sold themselves to these fellows," thought Old King Brady. "Doubtless we shall have to deal with them later on."

The mask whom Old King Brady took to be Col. Springer stepped out.

"Well, Robbins?" he demanded, "has the carriage come?"

"It has, sir. All is ready."

"Very good. Now, untie these men, except for their arms. Get their hats and put them on. You have got the two overcoats I ordered?"

"Yes. They are outside."

"Put those on, too. Get them started as quickly and as quietly as possible."

Having said this, "Col. Springer" returned inside.

The man with the whip now cut the Bradys apart and put their hats on.

Robbins brought in two overcoats.

These were thrown about the Bradys, being secured at the neck by buttoning the top button.

This effectually concealed their arms.

Now the handkerchiefs were removed, and the man with the whip drew a revolver and threw his whip aside.

"You will follow me, and don't you dare to open your heads," he growled.

They went down on the elevator, Robbins managing the lever.

The superintendent now went ahead, but returned in a moment.

"The coast is clear," he said, "but for heaven's sake hurry them across the sidewalk. If they are seen by the night watchman on this block it spells trouble for me every time."

An old-fashioned four-seated hack stood at the door, and the Bradys were now jammed into it.

The two men had removed their masks.

They sprang in after the detectives, and the hack started up Wall street at a rattling pace.

It was as Old King Brady had anticipated.

The men were certainly not brokers.

They were tough-looking characters, both of them.

Neither of the Bradys could remember to have seen them before.

They ran down Broadway to Morris street, and thence to the river front, and down on a wharf.

Here the hack stopped, and the detectives were taken out.

Two toughs stood ready to assist.

The Bradys were caught under the arms and dropped into a large rowboat which lay alongside the wharf.

The man with the whip and his companion got in also, and by a third man who was already in the boat the Bradys were pulled away.

CHAPTER X.

A WILD RIDE IN AN AUTOMOBILE.

The Bradys were blindfolded as soon as the boat was well out on the river.

After that they were taken out by Liberty Island, and put aboard some yacht.

Here they were locked in a small room between decks, and left to their own devices, while the yacht started up the Hudson at full speed.

It was the first opportunity the detectives had found to exchange a word since their capture.

"This is a nice mess," growled Harry, as soon as they found themselves alone.

"It is very unfortunate," replied the old detective, "but I don't know as I hold myself to blame, nor you either, for that matter."

"And yet we had discussed the chances of that man proving a traitor."

"I know; just the same they would have captured us even if we had not gone into that room."

"I suppose that is so. Where do you imagine they intend to take us to?"

"Probably to some house up the Hudson, owned by one of their number."

"You think that fellow who appeared to be the boss is Colonel Tom Springer?"

"I am sure of it."

"If we ever get out of this there will be some debts to pay."

"According to Colonel Tom, as we must call him, we have but one chance."

"That's what he said—yes. What do you suppose he meant by it?"

"Hard to guess. It wouldn't surprise me at all if we found Old King Copper up here. He may be able to throw some light."

"Yes, if we see him."

"They may have brought us here for no other purpose, Harry."

"I see your drift. That's so."

"Wonder whose yacht this is?"

"I wish I knew; but all in good time. I don't despair of getting out of this snap, by any means. Just think of the number of times we have been so situated. We always find a way to escape."

"I know it. I'm not despairing a bit, but you must admit that the sky don't look particularly bright."

"It will brighten. Hark! There is someone outside the door! Don't talk any more just now."

Whoever was outside did not come in, nor did the Bradys see anyone for an hour.

The bandages over their eyes had been removed upon the arrival on board the yacht, but their hands were still tied.

At last the yacht ran in somewhere, and stopped.

The "whip" man now appeared.

"Youse go ashore now," he said. "Take my advice and make no trouble."

He had been drinking, and his speech was decidedly thick.

When they got on deck they found his companion in a worse condition.

This man was actually drunk, and his efforts to conceal it were laughable.

The yacht had dropped anchor near a wooded shore.

The night was a bright one, as the moon was at her full.

One glance was sufficient to show Old King Brady that they were in the neighborhood of Tarrytown, for the "Hook" Mountain was plainly visible on the other side of the river.

The shore here was densely wooded. Houses could be dimly seen at a distance, but there was none in this immediate vicinity.

The Bradys were lowered into a boat, and the whip man followed.

The other fellow now started to descend the ladder.

The result was just what might have been expected.

He missed his footing, and went overboard.

The scene which followed was comical.

Each of the pair accused the other of being drunk.

At last the fellow, who proved to be a good swimmer, was fished out and hauled back on deck.

"Put him away somewhere!" bawled the whip man to

the yacht captain. "I don't want the drunken wretch with me, that's sure!"

The torrent of abuse which he got from his companion would not look well in print.

"Mr. Whip" had his way, however, and he was pulled ashore with his prisoners.

They landed at a point where a road came down to the shore out of the woods.

Here stood a large automobile, but there appeared to be no one in charge of it.

"Where in Sam Hill is the shuffer!" bawled Mr. Whip. "Has he gone off and left his machine?"

It looked so.

The fellow hallooed until he was hoarse, but no one appeared.

"We must get back," declared one of the boatmen. "The boss's orders was that we should not remain here an unnecessary minute."

"Go on, then! I don't want yer," retorted Whip. "I can run this machine myself, and I can find the way, I guess."

The boat then departed.

Whip was now very much on the growl.

"Say, Brady," he exclaimed, "this is a nice note, isn't it? The idea of leaving me single-handed to manage youse two! Did you ever hear the like?"

"Are you a detective?" asked Old King Brady, quietly.

"Yes, I am, old man, and as good a one as you, anny day in the week, in spite of yer big name—see?"

"Oh, I don't doubt that. I'm getting old and past my usefulness."

"That's what you are."

"I had about made up my mind that this should be my last case. By the way, what office are you with?"

"None of your blame business."

"Oh, that's all right. I was only thinking that you fellows don't get any too much pay. I'm worth a few dollars, as you may know."

"I don't know nothing about it, but I've heard it said that you were as rich as mud."

"Perhaps we could come to terms, friend? This seems to be a good opportunity."

"No, no! I am as ready to take a bone as the next man in the business, but it can't be done in this case."

"Why not?"

"Because I've got a steady engagement hanging on the success of this deal, if you want to know. Get in now. I'm not going to wait for that fellow anny longer."

"But do you know how to manage the machine?"

"I know how to manage you, old man!" roared Whip, suddenly drawing his revolver, and pointing it at Old King Brady's head. "Get in now, or I'll shoot youse both, and kick yer carcasses into de river."

There seemed to be nothing for it but to comply.

So the Bradys allowed themselves to be boosted into the back seat, and Whip started the auto up the hill.

Soon they came upon the highway, where he turned north, giving the auto full head.

In a minute they passed a little frame building, in which was a saloon.

A man was just coming out of the door.

He gave a shout as he saw the machine go shooting by.

"Hey! Say! Stop!" he cried. "What are you doing with that automobile?"

Whip tried to stop the best he knew.

Trouble was he didn't know his business.

Instead of checking speed, he turned on more power.

Perhaps the stuff he had drank was responsible for the trouble.

At all events, they went flying forward like the wind.

The man, who was probably the chauffeur, made a wild dash after them, but was, of course, soon left far in the rear.

"You'll kill yourself and us, too!" shouted Old King Brady. "Turn your lever the other way, you fool!"

"Mind your own blame business!" bawled Whip.

He twisted and turned the lever wildly.

The result was what might have been expected.

The auto swerved from the road, and for an instant death seemed to stare the Bradys in the face.

The machine tore through a rail fence, and started over a stretch of pasture land.

Now at last the fellow succeeded in checking its speed.

But just as he did this the auto struck a big stone.

It gave a leap into the air, and almost went over.

Out flew Whip, with a despairing cry.

The auto ran on for a few paces and stopped.

Just what had happened to bring about this result the Bradys never troubled themselves to ascertain.

The next they knew they were thrown violently against each other, and enveloped in a suffocating smoke.

Out they fell upon the grass, Harry on top.

The forward wheel had come off, and the only wonder was that the machine had been able to run even that short distance after the shock it had received.

Something had set the gasoline tank blazing, and it was evident that the auto was doomed.

Harry rolled off of Old King Brady, and with a quick jump regained his feet.

But this stunt was beyond the power of the old detective.

There he lay close to the burning automobile.

"Roll over, Governor! Roll over out of the way!" shouted Harry. "Your clothes will go ablaze if you lie there!"

"Upon my soul, I don't know that I can even do that much. I am so shaken up by the fall," growled the old detective. "But I'll try."

With considerable effort he managed to roll out of the way.

"Where is that drunken fool?" he demanded.

"Don't know! Dead, like enough. Here, let me get you on your feet."

"You can't do it, Harry."

"Yes, I can."

Harry turned his back to Old King Brady, and by squinting down managed to get a grip on his coat collar.

Thus he lifted him to a sitting position, and by a second effort got him on his feet.

By this time the auto was blazing away in great shape.

"This is going to bring people here in a minute," said Old King Brady. "If we could only get rid of these infernal cords now would be our time to find out who the machine belongs to, and all about it; but we don't want to get caught here in this shape."

"Indeed we don't. Some of these jays will be running us to jail."

"Right. Let's make for that bit of woods over there and wait."

It was only a couple of hundred yards to the end of the pasture lot and a strip of woods.

The Bradys crawled between the bars of the old-fashioned rail fence, and got in among the trees.

"This is all right," said Harry. "We can easy get rid of these cords now."

"I'll rub mine against this rail," said Old King Brady. "It won't take but a minute to cut them through."

"Indeed you won't. That's my job. You stand still, Governor, and get your breath."

The cord with which Harry was tied was just ordinary stout twine, and by rubbing his hands back and forth over the fence rail he very soon parted it.

"Free!" he cried, and whipping out his knife he put Old King Brady in the same condition.

"That's all right," said the old detective. "Now we are in the swim again. Is there anybody over there?"

"Not yet."

"Then come; we will see what has become of our man."

Climbing over the fence, the Bradys started for the burning automobile.

CHAPTER XI.

LIGHT AHEAD AT LAST.

The flames were ascending high from the burning auto when the Bradys reached it, but as yet no one had put in an appearance. It was easy to trace back the course of the burning vehicle over the pasture, and in a minute they came to the rock which had caused the accident.

Here, lying face down upon the grass, was the drunken detective.

"Dead!" exclaimed Old King Brady; and so it proved. The man's neck had been broken by the fall.

"Well, upon my word, he got his dose all right," said Harry.

"That's what," replied Old King Brady. "Just keep an eye out while I make sure."

The old detective, who is a good deal of a doctor in his

and way, hastily examined into the condition of the man, and found it as we have said.

"He has met with his just deserts," declared the old detective. "I'll just see what he has in his pockets. It may give us a clew. Ha! Here is his name on his shirt—J. McNally."

"He must be one of Old King Copper's private detectives!" cried Harry. "One of the two who resigned in such a hurry."

"Exactly, and that other fellow was probably Jones. Both sold out to this rascally copper syndicate, no doubt."

Hastily Old King Brady ran his hands through the man's pockets.

What he found had no bearing on the business, however.

"Two men coming in from the road!" cried Harry.

The old detective straightened up, and faced the newcomers, who were running over the pasture.

"This way, friends!" he shouted. "There is a dead man here."

The pair, who proved to be a couple of countrymen, came hurrying up.

"What's happened him?" demanded one.

"We know no more than you do," replied the old detective. "We just happened to be passing, and saw the fire, but I take him to be the driver of that machine."

"Is he dead?"

"Yes; his neck is broken."

"Blame him; it ought to be! Them automobilists think they own the earth."

"Don't be too hard on the poor man now he is dead. I wonder whose auto it can be?"

"Been up there?"

"No."

"Let's go, then. There's only one person right around here what owns an automobile, and he is Col. Tom Springer."

"Come on," said the old detective, and they started for the burning machine.

"Yas; that 'ere's Kun'l Springer's mashine!" drawled the second countryman.

"It has no number on it," remarked Harry.

"Waal, that's so, tew, but it's Kun'l Springer's, all right."

"Are you going to Tarrytown?" asked Old King Brady.

"Yas."

"We're heading the other way. Perhaps you'll undertake to notify the authorities?"

The man agreed to this.

There was further talk.

Casually Old King Brady inquired where Col. Springer lived.

He got the direction.

The colonel's house was about a mile distant, it appeared.

While they were talking the man who had come out of the saloon appeared at the end of the pasture lot.

He came running up in a great state of excitement.

"Will he know us?" whispered Harry.

"I doubt it," replied the old detective. "We shall have to take our chances, anyway."

"Those infernal clothes of yours will give us away sure," growled Harry.

"Cut that out," retorted the old detective. "My clothes may win this fight for us yet."

The newcomer proved to be an insignificant sort of person, and half full of whisky at that.

If he recognized the Bradys as the prisoners he had seen in the automobile he showed it by no sign.

"What happened to it?" he demanded. "That's Col. Springer's auto, I suppose you know."

"I know nothing about it," replied Old King Brady. "We were just passing. This gentleman said it was Col. Springer's, whoever he may be."

"He's my boss. A fellow stole this machine, and this is what comes of it. I shall get the bounce sure."

"Where were you when he stole it?" demanded one of the countrymen. "In Haggerty's, tanking up?"

"Mind your own business," was the reply. "It's nothing to you where I was."

"There's a dead man lying back there a piece," said Old King Brady. "Probably he is the thief!"

Just then an auto stopped on the road, and two men sprang out.

"Thunder! There's the boss now!" gasped the man.

Without another word he started for the woods on the run.

The Bradys exchanged glances and moved away.

"Time for disappearing," whispered Harry.

"It certainly is," was the reply. "Our usefulness is all over here."

They struck across the pasture at an oblique angle, and gained the road at some distance from the automobile.

Two other men had come from the machine, leaving no one behind them but the chauffeur.

"If we could have captured that fellow and got him over on our side, it would have been great," remarked Harry.

"Exactly so," replied Old King Brady. "But it did not work that way."

"This is a strange twist to the case."

"That's what it is. But now, Harry, we must make the most we can out of it. I think there is yet a chance to get hold of that chauffeur."

"How?"

"Think. It is out of such happenings as these that one learns to be a detective. I have a scheme in my head for putting my finger right on that man. See if you can figure out what it is for yourself."

"He said he would get the bounce for what he had done."

"Yes, and he meant it. He'll never go back to Tom Springer with the destruction of that fine auto on his shoulders."

"Then he will probably head for Haggerty's saloon and lay in a few more drinks."

"Right. And to Haggerty's we lie ourselves forth-with."

"Can't you disguise yourself, Governor?"

"Not I."

"You have got the materials for half a dozen disguises about you, as you very well know."

"Right; but I won't use them. I'm going ahead just as I am."

Harry groaned.

"That infernal hat and coat of yours will be the death of us yet," he said.

"Shut up! Come on," was the reply.

They walked on past the automobile, of which Old King Brady noted the number.

The chauffeur merely glanced at them.

Over in the pasture they could see that the crowd was about the dead detective.

"Harry," whispered Old King Brady, "this is the turning point in our case. Mark what I say."

"What do you mean?"

"Just this: I have observed for years that such rascals as this man Springer always seem to get just so far in their rascality, and then things begin to go against them. Once the change comes it all seems to go the other way."

Harry made no answer.

He sometimes gets tired of Old King Brady's wise sayings, and he felt that way now.

He looked back to see if the chauffeur was coming, but there was no one visible on the road but the man in the automobile.

The Bradys pushed on until they came to the little roadside saloon.

It was now nearly eleven o'clock, but the place was still lighted up.

"Once more, Governor, will you turn that coat?" demanded Harry.

"No, I won't!" retorted Old King Brady. "Let's have no more of that now!"

And one minute later Harry had to admit that he was all wrong.

They entered the saloon.

There was no one in the place but a big red-whiskered man, who stood behind the bar—evidently the proprietor of the place.

"Be the powers, an' it's me ould friend, Mr. Brady!" he cried. "Wull, wull, wull! It's a sight for sore eyes to see you agin, so it is!"

Out came the glad hand.

Old King Brady gave it a hearty shake.

"Upon my word, Mike, though I saw the name over the door I never dreamed it was you!" the detective exclaimed.

"Let me introduce Young King Brady, my partner," he then added.

"Harry, this is Mike Haggerty, who worked for me

away back in the seventies, and a fine man for certain lines of work he was, too."

Haggerty nearly crushed Harry's hand in his fat paw.

"Ah, thim was the times, Mr. Brady!" he cried. "Do you mind the night I steered the river thieves into your hands at the foot of East 21st street, by the gas-house dock?"

"Indeed I do, Mike."

"Didn't we bag them slick?"

"Yes; and you got a bullet in your jaw that night, and have had to wear your big red whiskers to conceal the scar ever since."

"True for yer. But I seen Jack Lynch, who shot me, go on to the gallows in the Tombs yard, so I did. But what brings yer here, boss? Fust of all, what will youse have to drink? Sure, the best in the house isn't half good enough for Old King Brady, and that's true!"

Here, was luck!

The Bradys had found a friend.

Rough as Mike Haggerty was, he was still a man in whom the old detective felt absolute confidence.

Without an instant's delay he began questioning him about Col. Springer.

"Do I know him? Why, sure, an' he is a blamed rascal!" cried Haggerty. "He lives in a big house beyont here, all along with the servants since his wife died five years ago. The drunken mob he entertaynes up there would shame a Sixth Ward mixed-ale house in the ould days, an' yet he's the man who tried to have me license took away and me place closed up for fear it would injure the morals of the town."

This speech was enough.

Old King Brady at once launched out and told Mike Haggerty the whole case.

"Can you help me, Mike?" he asked.

"Sure I can," was the reply. "I towld that feller he was drinking too much, but he wouldn't listen. If you want to go up to Springer's, g'wan. It's meself who will chase down to Bob Fitchett the sheriff and get him up there with a posse. If this ould man is held a prisoner then we'll blame soon have him out, for Bob is a friend of mine."

"Something of that sort had better be our programme," said Old King Brady. "But here comes someone now."

The door opened, and in walked the runaway chauffeur. Old King Brady promptly pounced upon him.

"My friend," he said, displaying his shield, "we are detectives. You are under arrest!"

"Hurroo!" cried Haggerty. "Them's the Bradys. Bill! Make terms wit 'em while ye can, or they'll send you up the river for a hundred years."

CHAPTER XII

CONCLUSION.

Bill Behrends was the name of the chauffeur.

He promptly collapsed when he saw what he had run up against in Mike Haggerty's saloon.

"You can't do nothing with me," he whined. "I wasn't running the machine."

"The loss of Colonel Springer's automobile is not the case in point at all," replied Old King Brady. "You have got an old man held as a prisoner up at your boss's house."

"Well?"

"Is it so, or is it not so?"

"It's the boss's business, not mine."

"Listen. Five hundred to you if you help us free that man to-night. Jail for yours if you refuse."

"An' you will get your money if Mr. Brady promises it," Mike Haggerty put in.

"Will I be wanted to testify against the boss, or will I be let go?" the fellow asked.

"Let go with the cash in your pocket right now as soon as the job is done."

"I'm your man."

"Ha! I thought so! Is the old man there?"

"Yes. He is John H. Dodgling, of New York."

"So? He is the man we want."

"It would have been dead easy to get him an hour ago. I don't know about it now that the boss has come home."

"You were told to have your auto ready for two more prisoners to-night?"

"Yes."

"Were you told who they were?"

"No. I was telephoned. No names were mentioned at all."

"Who's yacht were they to come in?"

"I don't know."

"Not Springer's?"

"No. His is being repaired."

"What part of the house is Mr. Dodgling confined in?"

"He is in a room on the ground floor. It won't be no trouble to get at him."

"Does he know where he is?"

"No."

"Does he know who has got him?"

"Oh, yes; he knows it's the boss. He don't know the rest of the gang, though."

"Do you happen to know how he was captured?"

"He was took in the boss's office by a lot of masked men, he told me. They brought him up the river on a yacht, and I fetched him up to the house in the automobile."

"Then you will go with us now?"

"Yes; any time."

Old King Brady took Haggerty to one side and they had a little talk.

The upshot of it was that the saloonkeeper started for Terrytown in his light wagon, and the Bradys and their ally walked on toward Walnut Lodge, as Col. Springer's house was called.

The fire was out when they passed the scene of the accident.

Nobody could be seen in the pasture.

Whether McNally's body had been removed or not the detectives could not tell.

Covering another mile, the Bradys ascended the hill and Behrends pointed out Walnut Lodge.

It was a handsome frame structure of considerable size, standing well back from the road, and surrounded by trees.

"Do we wait for Haggerty and the sheriff?" demanded Harry.

"No," replied Old King Brady. "I'm going to try to get Mr. Dodgling out first. As for the arrest of these people, it should be easily accomplished. I understand from Haggerty that the sheriff has a particular dislike to Colonel Tom Springer, and that he will leave no stone unturned to take him. It is nothing to us whether he does or not. We are working for young Jack Dodgling, and all we have agreed to do is to find his father and set him free."

"Perhaps Old King Copper won't care to have any arrests made."

"Exactly what I am thinking."

"On what charge will the sheriff arrest him?"

"Charge of abducting Old King Copper and holding him a prisoner. I make the complaint."

"Will you come on now?" asked Behrends. "Chances are them fellers is all tanking up in the boss's buffet. You ought to see it! You'd think he was running a saloon."

"Lead on," said Old King Brady. "If I get the chance I'll arrest Col. Springer myself."

Keeping clear of the driveway they advanced through the grounds until they came to the left wing of the big house.

Here there was a long window which opened upon a sort of belvidere, from which a view of the river could be had.

"That's the room," said Behrends, pointing. "They have got him in there."

"Is he tied up?"

"No. He has the freedom of the room. Them bars on the outside of the window keep him from escaping."

"Who had charge of him?"

"I did."

"Do you know what Col. Springer wants of him?"

"No. Every time they had their talk I was sent away. I don't know nothing about that part of the business, boss?"

"What are the chances of our being interfered with?"

"Mighty slim. There's only the gardener on the place, and the Japanese cook. He does all the work of the house with the gardener's and my help."

"Come," said Old King Brady. "We will tackle this problem right now."

They went up on the belvidere, and Old King Brady examined the bars.

They were just small iron rods screwed to the wood-work.

The detective produced a small screwdriver, and Harry another.

In less than five minutes they had every bar removed.

Old King Brady now examined the window fastening.

"Is this window nailed?" he asked.

"No," replied Behrends.

"Anything behind that curtain to keep us from breaking right in?"

"No."

The old detective produced a long, thin knife-blade which he noiselessly inserted between the sashes, and pushed the fastening back.

It moved with a loud click.

The detective withdrew the knife and waited.

At the same instant a voice exclaimed inside.

"Well, Mr. Old King Copper, how do you find yourself to-night?"

"The boss!" breathed Behrends. "Say, I've done my part. I ought to be let go."

"Right," whispered the old detective, "and go you shall. Here's your cash."

He counted out \$500, and placed it in Behrends' hand.

"Much obliged," said the fellow. "You're a gentleman. I've got out of this snap mighty lucky, I think. Good-night."

He was off like a streak.

Meanwhile a mumbling voice had answered Col. Tom Springer.

Presumably this was the voice of Old King Copper, but it was impossible to make out words.

Thus, of the conversation which followed, the Bradys only heard one side.

"You say you won't sign?"

"You will have to come to it."

"Fraleigh is dead. It will have to be an order on your son now. He has taken charge of your affairs."

"You won't sign? Oh, yes, you will! This is the last call. It is to be done to-night, or to-morrow I call in the reporters and give them the facts in the Merger deal."

"Yes, I will. That will put you on the run. I shall simply kick you out of here to-morrow after the papers are filled with accounts of your rascality."

"We have waited long enough, Harry," said Old King Brady, in a whisper. "Now is the time to spring our trap."

With one quick movement Old King Brady threw up the window sash and tore the curtain aside.

There sat old Dodgling, with Col. Tom Springer standing in front of him.

"Flames and furies!" cried the colonel. "Who are you? What is this?"

"Only the Bradys turning the tables on you, Colonel Tam!" said the old detective, covering him with his revol-

"Thank heaven!" gasped Old King Copper, staggering to his feet. "Get me out of here and I'll pay you any reward you may name!"

The first part of Old King Copper's proposition the Bradys speedily fulfilled.

Within three minutes they were on the march.

Col. Tom Springer went ahead, handcuffed, and covered with Harry's revolver.

When they reached the road they met the sheriff with a posse, who had come in two wagons.

Mike Haggerty was with them.

"Sheriff, put that man under arrest!" cried Old King Brady. "Mr. Dodgling here will appear against him and make the charge."

"Do it at your peril, Dodgling!" snarled Col. Springer. "Do it and I'll make you sick."

"No, no!" whined Old King Copper. "I—I can't do it, gentlemen. It's all a mistake. I—I have no complaint to make. Oh, for heaven sake take me home!"

A pair of disgusted detectives!

An angry sheriff!

A triumphant soundrel.

A cowardly old millionaire crook.

Such was the bunch at the gate of Walnut Lodge that night.

As the Bradys did not care to personally complain against Col. Springer, the broker was allowed to go, and the detectives took Old King Copper home and turned him over to his son.

And this ended the case.

The copper conspirators had depressed the market, and the result was heavy losses.

Col. Tom Springer went broke, and so did several others of the gang.

The Bradys' case fell flat.

Superintendent Robbins disappeared, and Col. Springer also left New York within a week.

Meanwhile Old King Copper was around as usual.

Jack called on the Bradys, and thanked them, asking them to send in their bill.

"We will leave that to your father," said the old detective, for such is his peculiar way of doing business.

Next day came a check for \$5,000.

And this ended the case of The Bradys and Old King Copper.

THE END.

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